



HOUSE TO ORDER



Speaker again, Pelosi sees 'new dawn' for 116th Congress

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California holds the gavel after at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cheering Democrats returned Nancy Pelosi to the House speaker's post Thursday as the 116th Congress ushered in a historically diverse freshman class eager to confront President Donald Trump in a new era of divided government. Pelosi, elected speaker 220-192, took the gavel saying U.S. voters "demanded a new dawn" in the November election that swept the Democrats to a House majority and are looking to "the beauty of our Constitution" to provide checks and balances on power. She faced 15 dissenting votes from fellow Democrats. For a few hours, the promise of a new era was the order of the day. The new speaker invited scores of lawmakers' kids to join her on the dais as she was sworn in, calling the House to order "on behalf of all of America's children." Even Trump congratulated her during a rare appearance at the White House briefing room, saying her election by House colleagues was "a tremendous, tremendous achievement."

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Day 13: Dems prepare to pass funding plan, Trump digs in

By LISA MASCARO, CATHERINE LUCEY and JILL COLVIN

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats prepared Thursday to pass a plan to re-open the government without funding President Donald Trump's promised border wall, as Trump made a surprise appearance pledging to keep up the fight for his signature campaign promise. Trump strode into the White House briefing room on the 13th day of the partial government shutdown, declaring that "without a wall you cannot have border security." He then left without taking questions from reporters.

The appearance came hours after the new Congress convened, with Democrats taking majority control of the House and returning Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi to the speakership. Democrats expect to quickly pass legislation to re-open the government — without funds for the wall. "There is no amount of persuasion" Trump can use to get her to fund his wall, Pe-



President Donald Trump speaks in the press briefing room at the White House, Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019, in Washington.

losi said in an interview that aired Thursday on NBC's "Today." "We can go through the back and forth," she added. "How many more times can we say no?"

Trump is demanding billions of dollars to build his wall along the U.S. border with Mexico, which the Democrats have refused.

Congressional leaders from both parties met with Trump at the White House Wednesday, but failed to make progress during their first sit-down in weeks. The White House has invited the leaders back Friday for another round of talks that officials have suggested might be more successful now that Pelosi has been sworn in.

Reporters were told Thursday that White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders would be holding a hastily called late afternoon briefing. Instead, out walked Trump, flanked by members of the unions that represent border patrol and immigration enforcement agents. It was his first

time delivering remarks at the briefing room podium.

"You can call it a barrier, you can call it whatever you want," Trump said. "But essentially we need protection in our country. We're going to make it good. The people of our country want it."

Trump said his meeting with the union officials had long been planned and just happened to come at "a very opportune time." He also claimed his refusal to budge was winning praise, telling reporters, "I have never had so much support as I have in the last week over my stance for border security."

White House and Department of Homeland Security officials have spent recent days trying to make a public and private case that the situation at the border has reached a "crisis" situation that demands more money than Democrats have offered.

Earlier in the day, Trump tweeted an ominous video with images of what appeared to be migrants trying to rush the border and clashing with law enforcement, beneath the words "crisis at the border," "drugs" and "crime." The video

concludes with footage of Trump at the border along with audio from one of his rallies in which he vows to build his promised border wall and the crowd chants "Build the wall!"

The Democratic package to end the shutdown would include one bill to temporarily fund the Department of Homeland Security at current levels — with \$1.3 billion for border security, far less than Trump has said he wants — through Feb. 8 as talks would continue.

It would also include a separate measure to fund the departments of Agriculture, Interior, Housing and Urban Development and others closed by the partial shutdown. That measure would provide money through the remainder of the fiscal year, to Sept. 30.

The White House has rejected the Democratic package.

"Why not fully fund the Department of Homeland Security? Why doesn't the Pelosi bill do that?" said White House counselor Kellyanne Conway.

On Thursday, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer urged Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to put the House Democratic package on the Senate floor and send it to Trump.

"At this point, we need to take the lead here in Congress in the hopes that we can show President Trump the sweet light of reason," Schumer said.

McConnell has dismissed the idea as a "total non-starter" and a waste of time.

Vice President Mike Pence and Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney were on the Hill Thursday.

Mulvaney, a former member, was on the House floor during the vote for speaker. Pence, who was on the Hill swearing in new senators for a few hours, had an impromptu, brief chat with Schumer, encouraging him to attend the Friday meeting at the White House. Trump has said the partial shutdown, which began Dec. 22, will last "as long as it takes" to get the funding he wants. □

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PELOSI

Continued from Front

The president has tangled often with Pelosi and is sure to do so again with Democrats controlling the House, but he said, "I think it'll be a little bit different than a lot of people are thinking." As night fell, the House quickly got to work on the partial government shutdown, which was winding up Day 13 with Trump demanding billions in Mexican border wall funding to bring it to an end. Before midnight on Congress' first day, Democrats planned to approve legislation to re-open the government — but without the \$5.6 billion in wall money, which means it has no chance in the Republican Senate. The new Congress is like none other. There are more women than ever before, and a new generation of Muslims, Latinos, Native Americans and African-Americans is creating a House more aligned with the population of the United States. However, the Republican side in the House is still made up mostly of white men, and in the Senate Republicans bolstered their ranks in the majority. In a nod to the moment, Pelosi, the first female speaker who reclaimed the post she lost to the GOP in 2011, broadly pledged to make Congress work for all Americans — addressing kitchen table issues at a time of deep economic churn — even as her party readies to challenge Trump with investigations and subpoena powers that threaten the White House agenda. Pelosi promised to "restore integrity to government" and outlined an agenda "to lower health costs and prescription drug prices and protect people with pre-existing medical conditions; to increase paychecks by rebuilding America with green and modern infrastructure from sea to shining sea." The day unfolded as one of both celebration and impatience. Newly elected lawmakers arrived, often with friends and families in tow, to take the oath of office and pose for ceremonial photos. Then they swiftly turned to the shutdown. Vice President Mike Pence

swore in newly elected senators, but Senate Republicans under Majority Leader Mitch McConnell had no plans to consider the House bills unless Trump agreed to sign them into law. That ensured the shutdown would continue, clouding the first days of the new session. McConnell said that Republicans have shown the Senate is "fertile soil for big, bipartisan accomplishments," but that the question is whether House Democrats will engage in "good governance or political performance art." It's a time of stark national political division that some analysts say is on par with the Civil War era. Battle lines are drawn not just between Democrats and Republicans but within the parties themselves, splintered by their left and right flanks. Pelosi defied history in returning to the speaker's office after eight years in the minority, overcoming internal opposition from Democrats demanding a new generation of leaders. She will be the first to regain the gavel since Sam Rayburn of Texas in 1955. Putting Pelosi's name forward for nomination, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the incoming Democratic caucus chair, recounted her previous accomplishments -- passing the Affordable Care Act, helping the country out of the Great Recession -- as preludes to her next ones. He called her leadership "unparalleled in modern American history." One Democrat, Rep. Brenda Lawrence of Michigan, cast her vote for Pelosi "on the shoulders of women who marched 100 years ago" for women's suffrage. Newly elected Rep. Lucy McBath of Georgia, an anti-gun violence advocate, dedicated hers to her slain teenage son, Jordan Davis. As speaker, Pelosi will face challenges from the party's robust wing of liberal newcomers, including 29-year-old New Yorker Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who has risen to such prominence she is already known around the Capitol — and on her prolific social media accounts — by the nickname "AOC." California Rep.

Brad Sherman introduced articles of impeachment against Trump, though for now the measures are largely symbolic. Republicans face their own internal battles as they decide how closely to tie their political fortunes to Trump. House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy's name was put into nomination for speaker by his party's caucus chair, Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the daughter of the former vice president. He faced six "no" votes from his now-shrunken GOP minority. As McCarthy passed the gavel to Pelosi he said voters wonder if Congress is "still capable" of solving problems, and said this period of divided government is "no excuse for gridlock." One office remains disputed as the House refused to seat Republican Mark Harris of North Carolina amid an investigation by state election officials of irregularities in absentee ballots from the November election. Many GOP senators are up for re-election in 2020 in states where voters have mixed views of Trump's performance in the White House.



The sign at the office suite of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., is installed on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019, during the opening session of the 116th Congress.

Associated Press

Trump, whose own bid for 2020 already is underway, faces potential challenges from the ranks of Senate Democrats under Chuck Schumer. The halls of the Capitol were bustling with arrivals, children in the arms of many new lawmakers. Visitor galleries included crooner Tony Bennett and rock legend Mickey Hart, both guests of Pelosi. Incoming White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, a former congressman, sat with Republican leaders. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., opened the House prayer asking at "a time fraught with tribalism at

home and turbulence abroad" that lawmakers "become the architects of a kindlier nation." Overnight, Democratic Rep-elect Ilhan Omar of Minnesota tweeted a picture with her family at the airport. The House rules were being changed to allow Omar, who is Muslim, to wear a head scarf on the chamber floor. She wrote, "23 years ago, from a refugee camp in Kenya, my father and I arrived at an airport in Washington DC. Today, we return to that same airport on the eve of my swearing in as the first Somali-American in Congress." □



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Orrin Hatch ends 4-decade Senate run as unique GOP voice

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Orrin Hatch ended his tenure Thursday as the longest-serving Republican senator in history, capping a unique career that positioned him as one of the most prominent conservatives in the United States.

The departure of the vocal supporter of President Donald Trump ushers in another outsized Utah voice with a very different take on the president: Mitt Romney, whose renewed criticism of Trump is already making waves. Romney was sworn in to the U.S. Senate seat from which Hatch is retiring after four decades and at the height of his power.

A staunch conservative who wasn't afraid to cross the aisle, Hatch teamed with Democrats to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program for low-income kids. He also championed GOP issues like abortion limits and played a major role in shaping the U.S. Supreme Court, including defending



In this Feb. 21, 2018, file photo, Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, waves after addresses the Utah Senate while Senate President Wayne Niederhauser, R-Sandy, looks on at the Utah State Capitol, in Salt Lake City.

Clarence Thomas against sexual harassment allegations during confirmation hearings.

In recent years, the 84-year-old helped pass a federal tax overhaul, pushed for Trump's divisive decision to downsize two national monuments in Utah and

called for a return to an era of political civility.

Hatch, who did not agree to an interview with The Associated Press after several requests over the last month, was a fresh-faced trial lawyer from the tiny Utah community of Pittsburg when he narrowly up-

set Democratic Sen. Frank Moss in 1976.

He was a newcomer who appealed to the right wing of the Republican Party, University of Utah political science professor Tim Chambless said. His candidacy got a boost from an endorsement by another conservative rising star, Ronald Reagan.

After Hatch took office, he quickly secured a place on the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he would serve for decades. He has participated in the confirmation hearings of every current Supreme Court justice, including the contentious ones of Thomas and Brett Kavanaugh.

The senator famously defended Thomas during confirmation hearings by reading aloud from "The Exorcist" to suggest Anita Hill lifted details of her sexual harassment allegations from the horror book.

But Hatch also recommended President Bill Clinton name Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a liberal, to the court. "Few senators can claim a fraction of the influence of Orrin Hatch on the direction and makeup of the United States Supreme Court," George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley said in an email.

Hatch, who learned to box

as a child and later made friends with Muhammad Ali, didn't back down from rhetorical battles but also formed friendships with political opponents, particularly the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. He highlighted his ability to work with Democrats in a short-lived campaign for president in 2000.

He joined with Kennedy on the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as the \$24 billion children's insurance program. When the liberal icon died in 2009, Hatch said they "were like fighting brothers."

But Hatch strongly opposed President Barack Obama's signature health care law and more actively courted the conservative wing of his party after his colleague, Sen. Bob Bennett, was ousted in a tea party wave in 2012.

Hatch would later use his clout to help Trump push a major GOP tax overhaul and cheer the president's decision to downsize the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase national monuments in a win for state Republicans.

The senator also made waves in copyright law, helping make it a crime to illegally download music at a time when it was considered a serious threat to the music industry. Hatch is a songwriter himself, and one of his tunes went platinum after appearing on a compilation of Christian pop music.

A member of the Mormon church, Hatch has said legislation protecting religious freedom is his greatest accomplishment.

He has called for lawmakers to find ways to allow people to practice their faith while shielding the LG-BTQ community from discrimination.

In his farewell speech last month, Hatch bemoaned the disappearance of political civility and challenged his colleagues to work constructively for the good of the country.

"Things weren't always as they are now. I was here when this body was at its best," he said. □

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Governor calls off planned shutdown of NYC subway line

By DEEPTI HAJELA
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Nearly a quarter-million New Yorkers who for years dreaded "L-mageddon," a planned 15-month shutdown of a key subway tunnel between Manhattan and Brooklyn, got a last-minute reprieve from the governor Thursday with a new plan that will allow repairs to go on at nights and weekends and keep the trains running.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo made the surprise announcement just weeks after convening a panel of top engineering experts to take another look at the L train tunnel beneath the East River to see if there was a way to fix flood damage from 2012's Superstorm Sandy without doing as much demolition and disrupting so many lives. Turns out, there was.

"This was an outside-the-box, creative solution," said Cuomo, a Democrat, at a news conference announcing the new plan. He was flanked by engineering experts from Columbia and Cornell universities who dreamed up the proposal. "You have to be willing to think outside the box or break the box."

While many were relieved by the announcement, some wondered whether the last-minute change had been full thought through.

The announcement came after years of planning for the upheaval expected to be caused by the tunnel's closure, which was supposed to happen in April. Brooklynites had already begun rearranging their lives for the expected "L-pocalypse," with some changing jobs or apartments to avoid the looming commuting snarls.

The original plan, adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority after lengthy public debate, had called for a complete shutdown of a portion of the L line for 15 months while workers repaired damage from Sandy, when salty, corrosive water flooded 7 miles (11 kilometers) of the tube.

The plan called for replacing old electrical equipment by removing a damaged concrete benchwall that lines the tunnel and encases power cables. The cables would then have been replaced and the wall rebuilt, in a labor-intensive process.

The new plan calls for installing cables on racks along the inside of the tunnels, and leaving the old cables where they are. The old concrete benchwall would stay too, encased in a protective fiber-reinforced polymer, where necessary, or patched.

Not having to take out and replace the old wall cuts down on cost and time, officials said. And the new plan could be accomplished with night and weekend work instead of a shutdown.

Asked about the plan at an unrelated news conference with police, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said his administration had only gotten initial information, but "anything that avoids disruption I favor obviously and a lot of people in Brooklyn, a lot of people in Manhattan have been really worried about the L train shutdown."

"So, if there is a plan that can be better for the people of our neighborhoods, that's great, but I want to reserve any further judgment until I hear more," he said.



Commuters ride the L train, Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

Those who would have been hardest hit were overjoyed with the news.

"I think we averted a disaster," said Robert Stone, 69, who was riding an L train to his home near the Third Avenue stop in Manhattan. "This line is full, it's one of the most on-time lines of all the subways and I believe this is the right solution, not to shut it down. I think it's a great thing."

Shanice Brown, who manages the Goorin Bros. hat store in Williamsburg that depends on the L train to bring in customers and employees, said the change in plans is a big relief. Brown said she had been worried about what the shutdown would mean for business, and whether the alternatives the MTA had proposed in terms of buses, ferries and other subway lines would have worked.

"It didn't feel very secure at all," she said. "It was going

to be very trial-and-error." Some are questioning, however, if the new plan is truly the best option.

"The governor's plan may or may not work, but you'll pardon transit riders for being skeptical that a last-minute Hail Mary idea cooked up over Christmas is better than what the MTA came up with over three years of extensive public input," said John Raskin, executive director of the Riders Alliance, a transit advocacy group. "We need a full public release of the details of Governor Cuomo's idea, as well as the mitigation plans that will allow hundreds of thousands of L train riders to get around during the inevitable shutdowns and slowdowns in service."

The L line is one of the city's most crowded, running through neighborhoods like Williamsburg and Bushwick that have become major draws for young people

and the businesses that cater to them, like restaurants and bars. Since 1990, ridership has vastly increased, with about 400,000 rides on an average day. Of those, more than half go through the tunnel.

The agency could have gone with a three-year partial shutdown, but the MTA decided in mid-2016 that it would be better to close the Canarsie Tube completely starting in the spring of 2019. That called for L train service at five stops in Manhattan to be halted, as well as trains through the tunnel. The line would continue to operate among Brooklyn neighborhoods.

MTA Acting Chairman Fernando Ferrer called the new plan "an innovative and more efficient approach" and said the agency, which operates in the city and its suburbs but is controlled by the governor, would adopt it in full. □

AP Exclusive: Big jump in U.S. Catholic dioceses naming names

By **CLAUDIA LAUER**

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Over the past four months, Roman Catholic dioceses across the U.S. have released the names of more than 1,000 priests and others accused of sexually abusing children in an unprecedented public reckoning spurred at least in part by a shocking grand jury investigation in Pennsylvania, an Associated Press review has found.

Nearly 50 dioceses and religious orders have publicly identified child-molesting priests in the wake of the Pennsylvania report issued in mid-August, and 55 more have announced plans to do the same over the next few months, the AP found. Together they account for more than half of the nation's 187 dioceses.

The review also found that nearly 20 local, state or federal investigations, either criminal or civil, have been launched since the release of the grand jury findings. Those investigations could lead to more names and more damning accusations, as well as fines against dioceses and court-ordered safety measures.

"People saw what happened in these parishes in Pennsylvania and said, 'That happened in my parish too.' They could see the immediate connection, and they are demanding the same accounting," said Tim Lennon, national president of the board of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, or SNAP. The recently disclosed accusations date back six or seven decades in some cases, with the oldest from the 1910s in Louisiana. Most of the priests were long ago removed from ministry. An AP examination found that more than 60 percent are dead. In most cases, the statute of limitations for bringing criminal charges or suing has run out.

Nevertheless, advocates say exposing molesters nearly two decades after the scandal first erupted in Boston in 2002 is an encouraging step, in part because it gives some vic-



In this Aug. 15, 2018 file photo, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, celebrates Mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington.

tims a sense of vindication after decades of official silence or denials. Also, it could increase pressure on dioceses to set up victims' compensation funds, as the church has done in Pennsylvania already. And it could result in the removal of molesters from positions outside the church that give them access to children.

"This is a milestone. We are getting closer and closer to what this ought to be, the true coming to terms that would have to be at a national level," said Joe McLean, who filed a lawsuit with other victims seeking to compel the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to release files on alleged abusers nationwide.

The Pennsylvania investigation, led by state Attorney General Josh Shapiro, identified nearly 300 "predator priests" dating back seven decades and accused church leaders of covering up for the abuses, in some cases by returning priests to duty after short stays in treatment centers or reassigning them. Advocates said the report had big impact because it was the largest to date in scope, encompassing most of the state.

Victims' advocates and others, including some church officials, said the re-

port was largely responsible for the urgency now being shown by the church. Many bishops cited those findings and other scandals — including the resignation over the summer of Washington Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, accused of groping an altar boy in the 1970s — in their letters to their congregations.

The biggest list of names has come from the Jesuits West Province, a religious order that encompasses nine Western states. It identified 111 priests. The New Orleans Archdiocese and the Diocese of Syracuse, New York, named 61 and 57 respectively. The Great Falls-Billings, Montana, Diocese disclosed 47 names, including those of a few nuns, while the Los Angeles Archdiocese reported more than 50 from the past decade or so.

Some dioceses, like Peoria, Illinois, released only names with no information on the allegations or the church's response. Others detailed such things as parish assignments, numbers and dates of allegations — including an Omaha priest with 20 to 35 accusations against him — and attempts at treatment, restriction and punishment. And more names could be coming in places where attorneys general have launched statewide

investigations such as New Jersey, New York, Nebraska, Florida and Delaware, or in cities like Houston or Cheyenne, Wyoming, where local prosecutors are looking into individual priests. In his Christmas address last month, Pope Francis made an unprecedented call for priests who had abused children to turn themselves in and vowed the church will "never again" hide their crimes. The world's bishops will hold a summit at the Vatican next month to forge a comprehensive response to the crisis.

The U.S. bishops adopted new reporting procedures and other reforms after the furor in Boston but held off on any further measures recently at the direction of the Vatican. The bishops are holding a retreat outside Chicago starting Wednesday for "prayer and reflection" upon the scandal. Messages left by the AP seeking comment from conference officials were not returned.

In the 16 years between the Boston scandal and the Pennsylvania investigation, only about 30 dioceses around the country had released lists of priests they deemed credibly accused of abuse. Most of those dioceses came clean because they were forced to do so by lawsuits

or bankruptcy filings. Some dioceses declined to name any deceased priests, since they could not defend themselves, and some would not identify any clergy members at all.

Now, 13 dioceses have hired outside consultants including FBI agents and former judges to review their files, and dioceses that had previously been secretive are coordinating to release statewide lists in such places as Texas and New Jersey.

Bishop Anthony B. Taylor of the Little Rock Diocese in Arkansas disclosed the names of 12 priests in September and announced the hiring of a consultant to review diocesan files.

"The Pennsylvania grand jury report kind of helped us firm up our decision to move forward with what we were doing. It affected the timing rather than the decision," Taylor said.

In October, the pope accepted the resignation of Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, D.C., after he was accused in the report of mishandling some allegations of abuse against priests and others while bishop of Pittsburgh from 1988 to 2006.

The report is also credited with spurring an uptick in victims contacting support networks or law enforcement. Pennsylvania's clergy abuse hotline has received more than 1,400 new allegations since August, and Lennon said there has been a dramatic increase in victims reaching out to SNAP. While praising the release of names, many experts said the lists are often incomplete. Terence McKiernan, co-director of BishopAccountability.org, which has tracked abuse for more than a decade, said many dioceses have left off names of known abusers his group has published in its online database.

"It's not enough," agreed Pennsylvania's Shapiro. "I do not believe that the church is capable of policing itself though. They need outside forces, ideally law enforcement, to hold them accountable." □

Associated Press

Official: Robbery suspects, child drowned in Milwaukee river

By IVAN MORENO
Associated Press
MILWAUKEE (AP) — A 19-year-old pregnant woman, her toddler and a man all drowned when their car crashed into a Milwaukee river while police were pursuing them as suspects in two armed robberies. Autopsy results released Thursday found the woman, Shannon Nehmer, was several weeks pregnant and that 29-year-old Charles Barefield was driving the car. Police believe he was Nehmer's boyfriend. The toddler was Nehmer's 2-year-old daughter, Anamelia Hernandez.



This Jan. 1, 2019 screen shot from WISN-TV shows authorities pulling out an SUV from the Kinnickinnic River, a day after it crashed into the river during a police chase.

Associated Press

Police officers had initiated a traffic stop Monday evening because the Chevy Trailblazer Barefield was driving matched the description of a car used in two armed robberies earlier that day. When the car fled, police chased it, but the driver lost control and the SUV ended up in the Kinnickinnic River. The body of Nehmer was recovered from the water that night and she was pronounced dead at the scene. Divers found the bodies of the toddler and Barefield on Tuesday afternoon after the SUV was removed from the water. The Milwaukee County Medical Examiner said Thursday that they all died from asphyxia due to fresh-

water drowning. Police Capt. William Beauchene said the vehicle was submerged in 30 feet (9 meters) of water. The Wisconsin State Patrol is investigating the crash and whether adverse road conditions or drugs played a role in the deaths. Beauchene said the first robbery happened at about 7 p.m. Monday, when a man who was checking fluids under his car was approached by people who had climbed out of a black Chevy Trailblazer. The man said they demanded money at gunpoint and he was struck in

the face before one of the suspects took his phone and everyone left. About 25 minutes later, two other people were robbed at gunpoint, Beauchene said. The robbery victims told police that they had been attacked by two men and a woman. Police say the third suspect is in custody and that investigators have recovered the gun used in the robberies. The third suspect wasn't in the car during the police chase. Police said the toddler was probably in the car during the robberies, but they don't know for certain. □

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U.S. soldier charged in wife's killing flees to Thailand

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A 21-year-old U.S. soldier is accused of flying to Indianapolis from Colorado to kill his estranged wife, then dumping her body in a trash bin and fleeing to Thailand. Peter Lian was charged with murder Wednesday in the death of Khuang Par, whose body was discovered in a suitcase in an Indianapolis dumpster on Dec. 23. Par, 27, was living with Lian near Fort Carson in Colorado Springs but had returned to family in Indianapolis after she accused her husband of assaulting

her on Nov. 30, Indianapolis police Det. Christopher Craighill said in a court filing. Lian traveled to Indianapolis three weeks later, on Dec. 22. Flight records show he flew to Bangkok two days later. He didn't return to Fort Carson and is considered by the U.S. Army to be a deserter, Craighill said. His current location is unknown. On Dec. 3, Par obtained a court order to keep Lian away from her. He had been arrested a few days earlier by Colorado Springs police and charged with assault. □



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North Korean envoy to Italy vanishes, did he defect?

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO**
KIM TONG-HYUNG

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — North Korea's top diplomat in Italy has gone into hiding along with his wife, according to a South Korean lawmaker, raising the possibility of a defection of a senior North Korean official.

The news came from South Korea's spy agency, which briefed lawmakers in Seoul on Thursday on the status of North Korea's acting ambassador to Italy, Jo Song Gil. It said he went into hiding with his wife in November before his posting to Italy ended late that month. A high-profile defection by one of North Korea's elite would be a huge embarrassment for leader Kim Jong Un as he pursues diplomacy with Seoul and Washington and seeks to portray himself as a geopolitical player.

South Korean lawmaker Kim Min-ki said an official from Seoul's National Intelligence Service shared the information during a closed-door briefing. Kim did not say whether the spy



An external view of the North Korean embassy in Rome, Thursday, Jan. 3, 2018.

Associated Press

agency revealed anything about Jo's current whereabouts or whether he had plans to defect to South Korea.

Kim said the NIS said it has not been contacted by Jo. According to Kim, the NIS official said Jo and his wife left the official residence in early November, weeks

before his term was to end. Kim said he couldn't confirm if the NIS official revealed whether Jo and his wife were accompanied by any children. The NIS earlier said it couldn't confirm a South Korean media report that Jo was under Italian government protection as he seeks asylum in a Western nation.

North Korea has not yet commented on Jo's status. An official with the Italian Foreign Ministry said Thursday that Jo hadn't requested asylum from Italy. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with standard practice, also said Jo no longer held diplomatic status in Italy, presumably since his assignment had ended. Without citing any sources, Italian daily La Repubblica raised the possibility that while the Foreign Ministry was saying Jo hadn't sought asylum from Italy, that didn't rule out that the North Korean might have turned to other offices, such as Italian intelligence agencies for "assistance from Italy in order not to return to his country."

North Korea, which touts itself as a socialist paradise, is extremely sensitive about defections, especially among its elite diplomatic corps, and has previously insisted that they are South Korean or U.S. plots to un-

dermine its government.

About 30,000 North Koreans have defected to South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, according to South Korean government figures.

Many defectors have said they wanted to leave North Korea's harsh political system and widespread poverty. North Korea often accuses the South of deceiving or paying people to defect, or claims that they have been kidnapped.

North Korea may publicly ignore Jo's possible defection or hold back harsh criticism to avoid highlighting the vulnerability of its government as it tries to engage Washington and Seoul in negotiations, said Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University.

Jo had been North Korea's acting ambassador to Rome after Italy expelled then-Ambassador Mun Jong Nam in October 2017 to protest a North Korean nuclear test and long-range missile launch.

Jo seemed comfortable moving around Italy. In March 2018, accompanied by another embassy official, Pak Myong Gil, he visited two factories in Italy's northeastern Veneto region with an eye on eventual trade, according to La Tribuna di Treviso, a local daily.

One factory produced bathroom furnishings and another made accessories from marble. The newspaper quoted the local businessmen as assuming at first the delegation consisted of South Koreans, not North Koreans, given the economic sanctions against North Korea.

Among the Italians accompanying the North Koreans was a former Italian senator for what is now the League party, which in general opposes economic embargoes as bad for business.

The politician, Valentino Perin, told AP he had spoken with Jo many times, including about preparations for the visit to the Veneto region. Perin said he last met with Jo on Sept. 5, at an official reception organized by the North Korean embassy in Rome.

Showing Jo's business card, Perin said the North Korean was "very proud of his people and of his country."

The last senior North Korean diplomat known to have defected is Thae Yong Ho, a former minister at the North Korean Embassy in London, who fled to South Korea in 2016.

In an interview on South Korean television, Thae said he worked with Jo for more than a decade in the North Korean Foreign Ministry's Europe bureau and that Jo had a child when Thae last saw him in 2013.

Thae said Jo comes from a family of diplomats, with his father and father-in-law both serving as ambassadors.

The embassy in Italy is critical for North Korea because it handles annual negotiations with the Rome-based World Food Program over aid to North Korea, Thae said. He also said Italy has been a hub for smuggling luxury items to the North Korean elite, and Jo would have been involved in those activities.

Thae said Jo would have been North Korea's main diplomat for the Vatican and would have also handled discussions involving a possible visit to the North by Pope Francis if such talks had taken place. □

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Croatia gives Israel deadline for sale of US-made F-16 jets

By DARKO BANDIC
Associated Press

ZAGREB, Croatia (AP) — Croatia urged Israel on Thursday to overcome a rare disagreement with the United States and to confirm it can carry through on a deal to sell 12 used American-made fighter jets. Croatia's Defense Ministry said it needed an answer from Israel by Jan. 11 or the Balkan country's \$500 million order for a dozen F-16 aircraft would be canceled.

Israel made a tentative deal to sell the upgraded F-16 Barak fighters to Croatia in March pending U.S. approval for allowing the jets to go to a third party. The deal ran into trouble after the U.S. State Department hinted that Israel needs to strip off the upgrades that were added after Israel took delivery of the planes from the U.S. some 30 years ago.

Israel upgraded the jets with sophisticated electronic and radar systems, which was crucial in Croatia's decision to buy the planes from Israel rather than from the U.S.

"If the planes are not in accordance with what we

have agreed, the deal will not be carried out and we will have another purchase bid," Croatia's parliament speaker, Gordan Jandrokovic, said.

Relations between the Trump administration and Israel have been very close, particularly on defense issues. But the sale of the jets to Croatia appears to be an exception. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met on Tuesday in Brazil but didn't agree on a way to end the impasse.

"We are expecting final and clear stands from both Israel and the United States on this issue and then we will make a final decision," Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said.

Croatian Defense Minister Damir Krsticevic said Thursday that Israel provided guarantees during the contract bidding process that U.S. officials would greenlight the sale.

"Can you imagine that we do not believe Israel?" Krsticevic asked.

The controversy over the bid has triggered calls for the defense minister's resignation.

The deal is Croatia's largest single military purchase since it split from the Yugoslav federation during a 1991-95 war. NATO member Croatia faces a mini arms race with Russian ally Serbia, which recently received six used Russian MiG-29 fighter jets. □



In this July 23, 2006 file photo, an Israeli F-16 warplane takes off for a mission in Lebanon from an air force base in southern Israel.

Associated Press

Search is on for containers lost off Dutch coast by ship

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Authorities in Germany and the Netherlands were searching Thursday for up to 270 shipping containers lost at sea by a cargo ship caught in a storm, saying that a few of them are carrying hazardous material. A bag of the substance washed ashore on a Dutch island.

The ship that lost the containers, the MSC Zoe, arrived in the German port of Bremerhaven early Thursday. The ship, which had last called at Sines, Portugal, lost part of its cargo Wednesday in a storm off the northern coast of the Netherlands and Germany. Germany's Central Com-

mand for Maritime Emergencies said authorities have established that three missing containers at most contained a dangerous substance, but none of them has been found yet.

The substance in question is an organic peroxide, a flammable and highly toxic compound. On Thursday, authorities in the Netherlands said that one bag of peroxide had been washed ashore on Schiermonnikoog island. German authorities said that most of the containers located so far were in Dutch waters. Special ships equipped with sonar were being used to search in the North Sea for sunken containers. □

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Sudan under al-Bashir: Long history of turmoil, conflicts

By HAMZA HENDAWI

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Street protests against Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir show no sign of abating. A growing number of his former allies are clamoring for his departure. None of his friends in the region are stepping up to help. One of the Mideast's longest autocrats may be on the way out.

But if al-Bashir, who came to power in a 1989 military coup, seeks to cling to power, it could mean greater violence and economic paralysis for Sudan and a new stage in a dark history of strife, military dictatorships and political polarization.

Once Africa's largest nation, Sudan under al-Bashir was prominent on the world stage in the 1990s and 2000s for all the wrong reasons.

It was the scene of a long civil war between the mostly Christian and animist south and the Muslim and Arabized north. It hosted Osama bin Laden in the early years of his jihadi movement that led to the creation of al-Qaida, landing Sudan a spot on the U.S. list of countries backing terrorism.

In the 2000s, it was most known for the brutal repression of an uprising in its western Darfur region, when the pro-government militias known as the Janjaweed became notorious for atrocities and al-Bashir himself was indicted by the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes and genocide.

After the south gained independence in 2011 in a referendum that al-Bashir agreed to in a peace treaty, Sudan lost a third of its territory and fell out of the international spotlight. In the years since, it languished in increasing economic misery.

That misery erupted several times into protests, each time put down by al-Bashir. He has tried to do the same in the latest unrest, sparked on Dec. 19, initially over steep price rises and shortages. Dozens



In this Dec. 9, 2000 file photo, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir shouts "Allah Akbar" (God is Great), upon his arrival at the village of Garaffa, 30 kilometers north Khartoum.

Associated Press

have been reported killed, and al-Bashir has arrested opposition leaders, imposed emergency rule and curfews in multiple cities and suspended classes in schools and universities.

Here is a look at Sudan's modern history and how recent events may shape its future:

HOW DID SUDAN GET HERE?

Since independence in 1956, Sudan has bounced between tumultuous party politics and military rule, while trying to hold together a north and south joined under British colonialism. Southern rebels took up arms the year before independence, starting the first civil war. In 1958, the military seized power, ruling for six years until a wave of riots and strikes in 1964. Elections were held, and a series of governments took office, all of which failed to end the war or agree on a permanent constitution.

Army officer Jaafar al-Nimeiri led another military coup in 1969. He dissolved parliament and outlawed political parties, starting 16 years of authoritarian rule. He fended off several coup attempts, including one by Communists in 1971 and another by followers of

Imam al-Mahdi, a messianic religious figure from the late 1800s. In 1972, he reached a peace deal ending the war in the south.

The south relaunched its insurgency 11 years later and the guerillas' ranks swelled when al-Nimeiri introduced Islamic Shariah law. After a popular uprising, the military removed al-Nimeiri in 1985 and — in a rare move for the region — quickly handed power to an elected government. The dysfunctional administration lasted only a few years until al-Bashir — a career army officer — allied with Islamist hard-liners and toppled it in a coup.

AI-BASHIR'S OWN MAKING?

Bashir's 29 years in power will likely be remembered as the most oppressive in Sudan's modern history. He began by trying to militarily crush the southern rebellion. Predictably, it did not work.

From Khartoum, his rule was based on his Islamist-military alliance, presenting himself as a leader of the 1990s wave of "political Islam" while building ties with violent jihadis. Using Islamist ideology as a rallying cry, al-Bashir created loyalist militias to protect his rule and built a political

machine of businessmen and politicians that held a lock on power and amassed massive wealth in the impoverished nation.

His renewed imposition of Islamic law alienated many and tore apart the social fabric of a country with a rich religious and ethnic composition. His use of Islamic militias in Darfur made him an international pariah. Partly trying to salvage his standing, he signed the peace deal with the south.

But as it gained independence, the south took with it three quarters of Sudan's oil resources, leaving the north without an economic engine. Since then, al-Bashir's main priorities have been keeping his lock on power while floundering for ways to repair the economy. He has manipulated shifting international alliances, playing regional powers against each other in hopes of financial aid and investment.

His relations with Egypt, Sudan's powerful neighbor to the north, are a case in point. Sudan has sided with Ethiopia in a dispute with Egypt over an Ethiopian dam being built, seen by Cairo as a threat to its share of Nile River water

— and al-Bashir stoked an old border dispute with Egypt. But then he had to quickly try mend relations with Egypt after Sudan's economic crisis worsened with the devaluation of its currency in October.

Al-Bashir has also cultivated oil-rich Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, receiving extensive aid after he sent troops to Yemen to fight alongside the two against Shiite Houthi rebels. But their trust — and Egypt's — has been undermined by his wooing of their rivals, Qatar, Turkey and Iran.

WHAT ARE AL-BASHIR'S OPTIONS?

Al-Bashir's domestic alliances have shown signs of crumbling in the face of the latest protests. The military and police are sitting on the fence. Political groups, including Islamists who were once allied with his National Congress Party have joined street calls for him to step down.

Those defections undermine al-Bashir's faltering response to the crisis, which he has tried to depict as a struggle against secularists backed by Western plots aimed at wrecking Sudan's Islamist "experiment." He has used religious rhetoric, telling a public struggling to get by that God will provide and quoting Quran verses to security officials in an attempt to justify killing protesters. He has options for political survival, but likely at the price of reducing his powers. He formed an investigation committee that could try to give him cover by prosecuting some accused of using lethal force against protesters or indicting businessmen and politicians for manipulated the market for personal gain. He may also try bringing political rivals into a new, inclusive government, or announce he will not run in elections set for 2020.

But he also may dig in, forcing the military and police to choose whether to back him or turn against him definitively, prompting new turmoil. □



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Thailand braces for powerful storm at southern beach towns

By SUMETH PANPETCH

Associated Press

NAKHON SI THAMMARAT, Thailand (AP) — Thai authorities suspended ferry services and began evacuations Thursday ahead of a powerful tropical storm that is expected to pound the Southeast Asian nation's famed southern beach resorts during a peak tourism season.

Rain was already falling around the Gulf of Thailand and officials warned that torrential downpours, strong winds and rough seas were expected in 16 provinces when Tropical Storm Pabuk makes its expected landfall late on Friday.

There are fears that the storm will be the worst to hit Thailand since 1989, when Typhoon Gay left more than 400 dead. A tropical storm in 1962 killed more than 900 people in the south.

In an incident possibly related to the storm, a Russian tourist in Koh Samui died Wednesday as he tried to rescue his daughter, who was struggling in strong surf. Thai PBS television reported that the daughter survived but her father lost consciousness after being tossed against some rocks and couldn't be revived by rescuers.

Thailand's Meteorological Department said the storm will lash southern Thailand's east coast from Thursday to Saturday, with the two provinces of Surat Thani and Nakhon Si Thammarat expected to be hardest hit. Surat Thani is home to the popular tourist islands of Koh Samui, Koh Tao and Koh Phangan.

Army trucks were driving around remote seaside areas in Nakhon Si Thammarat on Thursday evening, searching for strag-



Thai man walk close to a sandbank, which was built to protect properties of seaside communities in Songkhla, Thailand on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019.

Associated Press

glers who had not yet been evacuated.

"We have prepared three shelters and currently have about 1,000 people in them," said local official Kriangsak Raksrithong.

Fishing is another major industry in the south, and small boat owners were heeding the warning. Many dragged their vessels ashore, attaching ropes to the boats and having friends help tug them on to beaches.

The Meteorological Department said the storm was moving west into the Gulf of Thailand with maximum winds of 65 kilometers (40 miles) per hour, and that waves 3 to 5 meters (10 to 16 feet) high were possible in the Gulf of Thailand, and 2 to 3 meters (6 to 10 feet) high in the Andaman Sea on the west coast. It warned of strong winds and storm surges on the gulf side and said all ships should stay berthed on land through Saturday.

"There will be heavy rainfall and we have to prepared for flooding or an impact on transportation," Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-

ocha said. "We are ready ourselves, but if the rainfall is high we will need some

time to resolve problems." He later held a video conference with the governors

of the 16 provinces to discuss preparations for the emergency, including digging drainage canals to run off floodwaters, mobilizing rescue vehicles, ordering all boats to be docked, and readying medical facilities.

Southern Thailand's tourist industry is a huge moneymaker, and authorities have become particularly sensitive to visitors' safety since last July, when 47 Chinese tourists drowned when the boat they were on sank in rough seas near the popular resort of Phuket in the Andaman Sea.

On Samui island, beach guards hoisted red flags to warn people to stay out of the sea. Police patrolled beaches, although many were almost deserted. □

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Congo's Catholic church says data show clear election winner

By MATHILDE BOUSSION
SALEH MWANAMILONGO
Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — The Catholic church in Congo announced Thursday its data show a clear winner in Sunday's presidential election, and it called on the electoral commission to publish the true results in "respect of truth and justice."

The church, a powerful voice in the heavily Catholic nation, deployed some 40,000 electoral observers but could not say who the clear winner appeared to be, as Congo's electoral regulations forbid anyone but the electoral commission to announce results.

Observers have reported multiple irregularities as the vast, mineral-rich Central African country voted for a successor to departing President Joseph Kabila. This could be its first peaceful, democratic transfer of power since independence from Belgium in 1960.

The ruling party loyalist



Father Donatien Nshole, general secretary of the Congolese Episcopalian National Conference (CENCO) speaks to reporters following the presentation of CENCO's preliminary declaration on the Congo elections in Kinshasa Thursday Jan. 3, 2019.

Associated Press

whom Kabila put forward as his preferred successor, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, already has said he expected to win, while polling before the election had top opposition candidate Martin Fayulu ahead.

The electoral commission's president said it had collected results from about 20 percent of polling stations,

while some Congolese expressed doubt that the first results would be released on Sunday as expected.

"We are working hard to announce them as soon as possible," Corneille Nangaa said.

The internet remained blocked in the country in an apparent attempt by the government to calm

speculation about the results.

The United States urged Congo to release accurate results and restore internet access, warning that those who undermine the democratic process could face U.S. sanctions. The State Department noted the reported troubles on election day and said results should

be compiled transparently, with observers present, so that the votes of millions of people "were not cast in vain."

The internet outage has hampered the election observers' work. No Western election observers were invited to watch the vote, which was meant to occur in late 2016, after Congo's government was annoyed at international pressure amid concerns that Kabila was trying to stay in power. "The decision to cut internet and text messages hampered the transmission of data from the field," said Cyrille Ebotoko, technical supervisor of the Catholic church's observer mission. "It delayed our work by three days and considerably increased the cost since everything had to be done by phone."

Thirty-eight percent of the some 40,000 polling stations the mission observed were still missing electoral materials more than three hours after polls opened on Sunday, the mission said. □

Peru's attorney general reverses course on corruption probe

By FRANKLIN BRICENO
Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peru's attorney general on Wednesday reversed his dismissal of the lead investigators in a sweeping corruption probe into top officials, retreating in the face of a growing public outcry and a bid by the president that could remove him from office.

Attorney General Pedro Chavarry's announcement came just two days after he abruptly removed the prosecutors, a move that sparked street protests across Peru.

The action threatened to derail the investigation into whether several former presidents and other high-ranking officials accepted money from the Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht.

Despite Chavarry's retreat, President Martin Vizcarra pressed forward with his plans to rebuild the attorney general's office. He urged lawmakers to de-



A demonstrator holds up a poster that reads in Spanish: "Get out Chavarry!", referring to Attorney General Pedro Chavarry, in Lima, Peru, Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2019.

Associated Press

clare an emergency in the office, which could pave the way for Chavarry's removal.

Vizcarra walked down a Lima street to the congressional building to hand-deliver the proposed legislation, trailed by a crowd of roughly 2,000 supporters, a sign of his growing support among Peruvians tired of public corruption.

He praised Chavarry's re-

versal of course.

"It is good that a decision under such scrutiny has been rectified," Vizcarra said after leaving Congress, but he added that he would press forward with his drive to root out corruption in the Public Prosecutor's Office.

It was unclear when lawmakers might take up the president's bill.

Congress is controlled by

the opposition party led by former first daughter Keiko Fujimori, who is among those being investigated. But she backed the president's proposal Wednesday.

The fight arose over the Brazilian construction firm Odebrecht, which has admitted in U.S. court filings to winning public works contracts by paying \$800 million in bribes to officials across Latin America, including \$29 million in Peru. Chavarry reinstated chief prosecutor Jose Domingo Perez and the investigating team's fiscal coordinator, Rafael Vela. In December, they reached an agreement with Odebrecht executives who said they would deliver documents exposing bribes made to officials.

Prosecutors say the evidence is key to their cases against opposition led by powerful former first daughter Keiko Fujimori and former President Alan Garcia.

The agreement was due to be signed in early January. Chavarry made his surprise announcement of the prosecutors' removal in the final hours of New Year's Eve. He said he removed Perez for questioning his election as attorney general and Vela for supporting him. Chavarry also accused the prosecutors of blocking his request for information on the Odebrecht case, and he said Perez had made statements calling into doubt his objectivity.

Prosecutors also have publicly accused Chavarry of having ties with criminal organizations made up of magistrates and businessmen who bartered power for favors or money — a point Vizcarra used in pitching his proposed legislation to Congress.

The far-reaching probe includes 40 individual cases, more than 300 people and dozens of companies, all linked to Odebrecht projects in Peru. □

LOCAL



Welcome back to Aruba, Joe, Dobrodošli natrag u Arubu



Clyde Harms (R), author of "An Aruba in Libya", meets with Joe and Marcia Čupurdija in Marriott's Sports Bar. Joe was a Lt. Col in the US Air Force stationed at Wheelus Air Base in 1967 when Mrs. Harms and the children were evacuated to Italy on a USAF C-130 during the Six Days' War.

ORANJESTAD — Two years ago Joe Čupurdija, a former Lt. Col in the US Air Force, and his wife Marcia were visiting Aruba for the first time. That week Aruba Today published Chapter 7 of my book "An Aruban In Libya" and Joe sent me his reaction reading in part: "... I was stationed at Wheelus Air Base from July 1965 to December 1967. I was familiar with the Oil Companies Schools because my wife, at the time, was a substitute teacher at the Wheelus school".

As Chapter 5 of the book deals with the "The improbable connection of Wheelus with Aruba" and part of the improbable connection was the fact that my family, from Aruba, was evacuated from Wheelus in a USAF C-130 Hercules, this was too much of a coincidence.

But, there was an even greater coincidence. Joe's email address contained a Yugoslav word that intrigued me. My book contains two chapters that deal with my Yugoslav friends in Tripoli. Sure enough, my suspicion was confirmed! Joe's parents had emigrated from Yugoslavia to the States. One was from Serbia, the other one was Croatian. Another coincidence, as my good friend Milica Marinčić was from Serbia and her husband Vladimir Cvek was from Croatia. Born in the United States, Joe is a member of the Serb National Federation

(SNF) and like his fellow Serb Novak Djoković, Joe also identifies himself with the Serbian Diaspora. He always carries with him a copy of the American Srbobran, the oldest and largest Serbian newspaper in America and Canada, and the official organ of the SNF.

Joe became a subscriber to my articles. He would send me his comments regularly and we exchanged letters regularly.

In his first letter, Joe had written: "... our stay was most enjoyable and plan on a return visit...". This week



As a proud member of the Serb National Federation, Joe always carries with him the latest copy of the SRBOBRAN, the official organ of the Federation.



Joe and his wife Marcia did return to Aruba and the two former contemporary Libya residents and phantom friends finally met each

other personally in the Marriott's Sports Bar.

The coincidences however did not stop. Joe's first letter: "...Had a great time, in spite of the tons of seaweed that Hurricane Matthew churned up...". This week it was Kirk that churned up the tons of seaweed.

Marcia and Joe are again having a great time and have praised the restaurants that they have visited, but their highest praise was for the home cooked Aruban dinner that Mrs. Milagro Harms had prepared for them. Taking pictures of the spread on the table, Marcia commented, "My friends will be jealous when they see this".

Welcome back to Aruba, Joe and Marcia. We look forward to your next visit to our Dushi Aruba.

By Clyde Harms □

Workshop “Acrylic and Drawing Techniques” by Gustavo Paris



ORANJESTAD — Ateliers '89 kindly invites you to their next painting workshop with international artist Gustavo Paris. Each person has his own singular way to express his own creativity and wit. Therefore the artist presents this workshop “Acrylic and Drawing Techniques” applied to the search of contemporary individual concept, connecting creative ideas with applied technical fundamentals developing paintings and drawings during three weeks.

In recent years the use of mixed media in painting has brought down the drawing-painting border, making art expression richer and more profitable. The expansive movement so characteristic of Gustavo Paris full body of work can be described in this manner. His works “open



themselves up” towards space. In fact, they resemble cosmic landscapes, fragments of galaxies captured in their continuous and eternal becoming. In some pieces, the artist introduces - as a backdrop - a segment of this starry cosmos that have generated so many dreams in mankind; in others, he places a veiled horizontal bar that, by exercising a contrasting tension with the painting’s dynamic brushstrokes, contribute to the idea that a “human” landscape can be created - fantasized, dreamed of, and designed - even in Extra-planetary environments.

The artist and professor Gustavo Paris will supervise you in the developing of your own expression by doing drawing and painting exercises which will lead to a final exhibition. He thinks that every creator has an ability to transform the world - whether near or distant from him or herself - into something more significant than its natural appearance.

Every non-figurative creator is bent on transcending common things in order to arrive at the spiritual towards an internal landscape, and in some way, a connection with the cosmos from the internal con-

sciousness.

Gustavo Paris was born in Venezuela in 1974. He started his studies at a very early age at the art academy taught by artist Ildebrando Rossi. He received his bachelor’s degree in Plastic Art in 2001 at the Cecilio Acosta Catholic University in Zulia, Venezuela, where he started his career as a professor, teaching painting, drawing, and graphic art language from 2005 to 2010. Paris also taught at the Julio Arraga National School of Plastic Arts from 2008 to 2016. He is currently a full-time professor for the Faculty of Arts at the University of Zulia where he’s been teaching painting and drawing since 2012. Gustavo Paris has a long trajectory and exhibition record that includes exhibitions in multiple cities in the world.

“Reaching the intangible seems difficult and impossible, however the thought travels beyond reason and attracts the invisible to the visible, to be transported into a space of emptiness, of the internal and finds ideas and translates them. It translates into my purpose of existence”, Gustavo Paris (2012).

The workshop will take place from Monday January 7th 2019 till January 31st 2019 at Ateliers '89 located at Dominicanessenstraat 34, in Oranjestad. For more information visit their facebook page Ateliers '89. □



Travel Tips



1. When checking-in, you will always need your valid passport, along with your ticket, e-ticket receipt or e-ticket confirmation. For some countries a Visa is also required.
2. For all US-bound departures, check-in three hours before your scheduled departure time.
3. For all US-bound flights, after check-in, leave building through the exit on the left side of building; follow the signs and head towards local immigrations, main security screening, shopping area and the departure gates. Aruba Airport provides full US Pre-Clearance service.
4. For all Non US departures, check-in may vary between airlines and destinations; always consult your airline for more information. Being at the airport 3 hours before your departure flight is always safe.
5. For all Non US flights, after check-in, leave building through the exit on the right side of building; follow the signs and head towards Local immigrations, main security screening, shopping area and the departure gates.
6. If traveling with a carry-on, there are restrictions on liquids, gels and aerosols you can carry in your carry-on luggage. Always check with your airline on limitations.
7. Always check the weight limit of your baggage; excess weight may result in penalty fees.
8. Always label your bags and suitcases with your name, address and phone number.
9. Always leave all carry-on items unlocked while passing through screening points to not cause delays if these need to be inspected.
10. Avoid wearing big belt buckles, clothing with metal buttons, lots of jewelry etc. when traveling. If you have these on, remove all metal items and place these in a tray for screening. It is advisable to put all metal items in your carry-on luggage until you clear security. This will help speed up the process.
11. Remove shoes at checkpoint and place in tray for x-ray machine screening.
12. All electronic items should be placed in tray outside their case for x-ray screening.
13. Avoid packing foods and beverages in your check-in baggage. When traveling to the US, you have to comply with the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. More information <https://www.usda.gov/>.
14. If traveling with medication, please pack these in your carry-on luggage in their original packaging.
15. If you medical documentation, present this to the security checkpoint screener to inform them. The documentation is not required and will not exempt you from the screening process.
16. Take note of inadmissible items such as sharp objects, sporting goods, guns and firearms, martial arts and self-defense items, tools, explosive materials, flammable items, disabling chemicals and other items when traveling. More information available on www.airportaruba.com.

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New Honorary Consul of Sweden in Aruba

THE HAGUE — The Embassy of Sweden in The Hague, The Netherlands, herewith announces the appointment of Mrs. Yvonne H.M. Escalona as the Honorary Consul of Sweden in Aruba as of January 1st 2019.

Mrs. Escalona was born in Aruba, has the Dutch nationality and is a well-known Chartered Accountant in Aruba. Presently she is the Managing Director of the Visser Group of Companies in Aruba with branches in Curacao and St. Maarten. As of 2014 Mrs. Escalona is a member of the Board of Supervisory Directors of the Central Bank of Aruba. Furthermore she is the chairperson of the CasMarie Foundation, an expertise center for persons with a dementia syndrome and their family caregivers.

Mrs. Escalona is the successor of Mr. Ceasar Giovanni (Joe) Maduro who has been Sweden's Honorary Consul in Aruba since 1996. For his services Mr. Maduro was awarded the Royal Order of the Polar Star, Commander Class by the King of Sweden in 2009.

Ambassador Annika Markovic wishes Mrs. Escalona the very best in her role as Honorary Consul of Sweden in Aruba. □



The 2019 Unox Nieuwjaarsduik at MooMba was at risk

The story behind the orange Unox hats



NOORD — It was just last Tuesday January 1st that about 1,500 enthusiastic participants of the annual Unox New Year's Plunge ran into the Caribbean Sea at MooMba Beach for the traditional "Nieuwjaarsduik". For over 10 years locals and tourists the same gather at noon sharp at the popular beach bar to run towards the sea wearing the typical orange Unox

winter hats. A tradition that originated in The Netherlands and is sponsored by Unox, a supplier of Dutch pea soup. The orange hats are such a big part of the tradition that you can't imagine not having them during the event... well, we came close to that. Let's go back in time a little...

On Thursday December 27th MooMba's manage-

ment received notice that the container with the Unox hats was stranded in Curaçao, being disembarked there by accident. Contacting Curaçao Customs learned that the container could not be opened there and that the container had to be shipped off again with an untouched seal. However, it would never make it on Aruba on time. Other options as UPS, FedEx and KLM Cargo could also not get new hats in Aruba on time due to the holidays, so there was only one option left... book a flight to the Netherlands and send someone to pick up the hats. But how can you bring 1,000 hats (10 boxes) as luggage?

A seat on the TUI Dreamliner was booked and a MooMbs staffer was sent for a round trip to the Netherlands on a mission to bring back the orange hats on time for the Nieuwjaarsduik. In the meantime, Unox had shipped off new hats to a temporarily storage location as they too would be closed for the holidays.

After a 12-hour flight the MooMba representative arrived in the Netherlands on Sunday December 30th. After renting a vehicle big enough to carry on 10 boxes, he arrived at the storage location to collect the hats later that day. The next flight back to Aruba would not leave until the 31st, so in the early hours just 1 day before New Year he took the boxes with hats to Amsterdam airport. But how to you get 10 boxes of hats with a weight of 80kg from the car rental center to the check in desk of TUI, about a 20 minutes' walk? That's where Lennie came in. Lennie is supervisor at the porter service of Amsterdam Airport and he was willing to clear his already overly full schedule to carry the boxes to the check in area. He was so struck by the story that he even waived their fee. The look on the faces of the TUI ground crew was memorable when being confronted with 10 boxes of luggage for the Aruba flight.

Calls were made to the TUI head office to get permission to bring on board the entire cargo, clearly exceeding the maximum weight allowance. But not only did TUI approve of the extra cargo, they even waived the additional costs. Chapeau for the TUI ground crew at the airport and the decision makers at the main office. Everybody seemed to realize that you can't have a New Year's Plunge without the hats and that you can't disappoint so many people on the beach of Aruba.

After a smooth but long flight the messenger finally arrived in Aruba with the boxes, with the hats. At that time, it was already New Year's Eve, just a few hours before Aruba customs would close for the night and just hours prior to the event at MooMba Beach. First Class VIP service at Aruba Airport was gracious enough to assist with the boxes and to roll them out of the airport... at that time it became clear: Aruba would have the Unox Nieuwjaarsduik in 2019 at MooMba Beach. And so, it happened... about 1,500 participated in the event, happy faces all around, orange Unox hats everywhere to be seen. If they just knew the story behind the hats. The Nieuwjaarsduik 2019 was saved just on time.

Happy New Year! ☐



CENTRALE BANK VAN ARUBA

The Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) informs that the silver 5 Florin commemorative coin "Soldachi" will be obtainable as of December 27, 2018 at the CBA.

The hermit crab, in Papiamentu called "Soldachi", is a ten-legged crustacean land crab that lives both in the sea and on land. The hermit crab is well-known for its habit of living in a shell home to protect itself against predators. It is an omnivore and eats almost everything it finds in the vicinity of the water.

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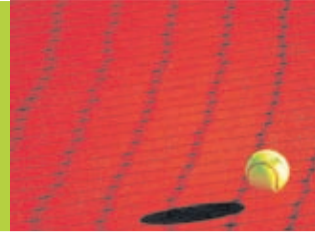
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For additional information please contact the Cash Operations & Logistics Department of the CBA at telephone number 525-2139.

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SPORTS



In this April 1, 2018, file photo, Ian Poulter reacts after his par putt to win the Houston Open golf tournament in a one-hole playoff on the 18th hole over Beau Hossler in Humble, Texas.

Associated Press

Poulter Makes up for missing tournament in a big way

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP) — Part of Ian Poulter's punishment for violating a PGA Tour policy is spending two weeks in Hawaii to start the new year.

That would be a most literal interpretation of the penalty.

And it only tells part of the story of how Poulter chose to make up for missing a tournament he was supposed to play. Along with adding two tournaments he had not played in the last four years — one of them, happily, was the winners-only field at Kapalua — Poulter hosted eight tournament guests for a round of golf at his home club in Florida, lunch and a tour of the house where he keeps his Ferraris and Ryder Cup memorabilia.

"I would say it was beyond what we would consider an acceptable make-good," said Andy Pazder, the tour's chief officer of tournaments and competitions.

Continued on Next Page



Penguins crush Rangers, extend winning streak to seven games

Pittsburgh Penguins left wing Tanner Pearson (14) skates into New York Rangers goaltender Henrik Lundqvist (30) during the first period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2019, at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Associated Press
Page 19

Federer wins to put Switzerland in Hopman Cup final

By **TRISTAN LAVALETTE**

Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Roger Federer relied on his trusted serve to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (5), 7-6 (4) Thursday and give defending champion Switzerland a spot in the Hopman Cup final.

The victory assured Switzerland's advancement, but Greece claimed a consolation 2-1 victory when Maria Sakkari beat Belinda Bencic 6-3, 6-4 in women's singles.

Greece also won the mixed doubles 4-3 (4), 2-4, 4-3 (3) in the Fast4 format.

The 37-year-old Federer's precision went up against Tsitsipas' power in the first set of the men's singles match, and not much separated the two. Eight games were

held at love.

"There was very little unforced errors and it was really good quality tennis," Federer said. "It could have easily gone three sets. For me it is about maintaining a good level of play and I am happy with my game." Federer will be going for a record third Hopman Cup title when the Swiss team faces either host Australia or Germany in Saturday's final.

"I will be excited to watch it tomorrow and see who we play in the final," Federer said. "This format lends itself to some exciting tennis."

Federer lost only seven games in wins over Cameron Norrie and Frances Tiafoe but found it tougher in his first match against Tsitsipas.



Switzerland's Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic share a laugh during their mixed doubles match against Stefanos Tsitsipas and Maria Sakkari of Greece at the Hopman Cup in Perth, Australia, Thursday Jan. 3, 2019.

Associated Press

Federer trailed 4-1 in the first tiebreaker before reeling off consecutive forehand winners to claw back into it. Tsitsipas double-faulted at 5-5 and Federer then won the set with an ace.

The serve continued to dictate play until Federer had

break points in the ninth and 11th games but was unable to convert. The 23-time Grand Slam champion, however, raised his game in the tiebreaker with a perfect drop shot to take a 6-3 lead. He closed it out shortly after.

Federer's appearances at the past two Hopman Cups were followed by Australian Open titles.

Earlier, Serena Williams beat Katie Boulter 6-1, 7-6 (2) to complete an unbeaten Hopman Cup campaign in singles. □

POULTER

Continued from Previous Page

"To do what he did ... was just terrific."

The violation was failing to play a tournament where he had not been in the last four years.

What got Poulter into this position was winning.

The PGA Tour has a policy that players who don't compete in 25 events must play a tournament where they haven't been in the last four years. Life members (20 or more tour victories) and veterans (45 years or older) are exempt. Poulter is neither.

The policy wasn't a problem until the 42-year-old from England won the Houston Open. Suddenly, he was eligible for the Masters. His movement in the world ranking got him into the U.S. Open and British Open. The victory took him to No. 20 in the FedEx Cup, all but assuring him at least three playoff events. And it put him squarely in the mix to make the Ryder Cup team for Europe.

"Winning was going to put me in default," Poulter said. Jordan Spieth also violated the policy when he didn't



In this Sept. 30, 2018, file photo, Europe's Ian Poulter celebrates after defeating Dustin Johnson of the United States during a singles match on the final day of the 42nd Ryder Cup at Le Golf National in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France.

Associated Press

reach the Tour Championship, and it received plenty of attention because the three-time major champion carries plenty of star power.

Poulter, however, was the first culprit, and he saw it coming not long after his Houston victory. He met with the tour at Hilton Head a week after the Masters.

"I told them, 'How do you want to go about it?' I'm going to be the first person, and it's going to be sensitive," Poulter said. "I want

to give something back so I can fulfill an obligation."

The actual penalty is unclear, and it was badly misinterpreted, especially relating to Spieth.

It falls under the "major penalty" category, which is a fine of at least \$20,000 and suspension from more than three tournaments. But that's ridiculous. Why punish a player for not playing enough tournaments by making him sit out even more?

Besides, the commissioner

has the final say on any tournament regulations. Poulter told the tour he would be at the Sentry Tournament of Champions for the first time since 2013 (it had been that long since his last tour victory), and stay an extra week for the Sony Open.

"That would tick two boxes," he said.

And then he offered a day with tournament guests. The Wyndham Championship was one Poulter could have played under normal circumstances, but that would have given him nine straight weeks leading up to the Ryder Cup. So he let Wyndham select who they wanted to send to Orlando, Florida.

"We had a great time," Poulter said. "I played nine holes with each group, we had a bite to eat, and a few of the guys wanted to see the car museum and my Ryder Cup office-homage. I took them through that."

He built this "museum" as part of a guest house so it could serve as corporate entertainment and charity functions, and this served the purpose.

Poulter says some of the

guests were pure "petro heads" who can't get enough of the cars. They all like golf, and his office is all golf, mostly the Ryder Cup. That includes a text message that European captain Jose Maria Olazabal sent to Poulter on Christmas Day in 2012, three months after Poulter nearly single-handedly led Europe on a comeback victory at Medinah. He framed the text on a silver board. He won't say what the message is.

"They get to see that when they're there," he said.

There are Ryder Cup trophies (five of them for Poulter), letters from Arnold Palmer, 60 tour bags filled with clubs that he has used in his 20-year career, notes from when he taught juniors as a fledgling club pro in England, and yardage books from a few significant moments.

"The report we got back was it was an exception day," Pazder said.

And so Poulter has paid his dues, devoting some eight hours of his time — and his home — to guests of a tournament he didn't play. And he is in Hawaii for two weeks. All is well. □



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Matt Murray makes 28 saves, Penguins rout Rangers 7-2

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Matt Murray stopped 28 shots to keep up his strong play since returning from an injury, and the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the New York Rangers 7-2 on Wednesday night for their season-high seventh straight victory.

Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin, Jake Guentzel, Kris Letang and Dominik Simon each had a goal and an assist. Zach Aston-Reese and Tanner Pearson also scored to help the Penguins win for the ninth time in 10 games. Patric Hornqvist had two assists.

Murray improved to 6-0 with a 1.49 goals-against average in six games since coming back from a lower-body injury Dec. 15. He also moved to 8-0 in his career against the Rangers, including the playoffs.

Ryan Strome and Pavel Buchnevich scored for the Rangers. They are 2-0-2 in their previous four games and 2-0-5 in their past seven at home.

Henrik Lundqvist, picked as an All-Star for the fifth time earlier in the day, gave up six goals on 18 shots before he was pulled less than five minutes into the third period. Alexandar Georgiev replaced him and finished with six saves.

OILERS 3, COYOTES 1

GLENDAL, Ariz. (AP) — Connor McDavid scored two goals and assisted on another to help Edmonton beat Arizona to end a six-game losing streak.

McDavid raised his team-leading total to 61 points (23 goals, 38 assists). He began the night fourth in the NHL in scoring, and has 12 points in the past five

games.

Leon Draisaitl scored his 22nd of the season for Edmonton, his sixth goal in five games. Draisaitl also had an assist and Mikko Koskinen stopped 29 shots for his 12th win.

Brad Richardson scored for Arizona.

CANUCKS 4, SENATORS 3, OT

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Elias Pettersson completed a hat trick in overtime and Vancouver held off Ottawa. Pettersson's second goal put Vancouver ahead 3-1 early in the third period, but Christian Wolanin and Mark Stone scored for Ottawa, with Stone tying it with 50 seconds left.

Pettersson won it by burying a 2-on-1 feed from Brock Boeser. Pettersson was named an All-Star for the first time earlier in the day. The 20-year-old rookie has 22 goals.

Sven Baertschi also scored for the Canucks, and Jacob Markstrom stopped 30 shots. Matt Duchene also scored for the Senators.

STARS 5, DEVILS 4

DALLAS (AP) — Miro Heiskanen celebrated his first All-Star nod with two goals, including a third-period tiebreaker, to lift Dallas past New Jersey.

Heiskanen and Tyler Seguin each scored twice after Jamie Benn tied it at 1 in the first period. Heiskanen, a 19-year-old rookie defenseman, has nine goals.

Seguin and Benn have been under scrutiny since Stars CEO Jim Lites ripped Dallas' highest-paid players Friday for "terrible play." Seguin ended a five-game goal drought that dated almost two weeks.



Pittsburgh Penguins goaltender Matt Murray (30) attempt to cover up the puck as he is pressured by New York Rangers center Brett Howden (21) during the second period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2019, at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Associated Press

Benn scored in his second straight game but didn't play for most of the final two periods because of an upper-body injury.

Kyle Palmieri, Jesper Bratt, Drew Stafford and Brian Boyle scored for New Jersey.

FLAMES 5, RED WINGS 3

DETROIT (AP) — Johnny Gaudreau's power-play goal with 10:23 left lifted Calgary past Detroit.

Detroit led 2-0 after one period, but the Flames rallied to hand the Red Wings their sixth straight loss. Sean Monahan, TJ Brodie, Elias

Lindholm and Michael Frolik also scored for Calgary. Darren Helm, Jacob de la Rose and Andreas Athanasiou scored for Detroit.

Gaudreau put the Flames ahead 4-3 after a slick play by Matthew Tkachuk, who stickhandled below the goal line and then slipped a pass between goalie Jimmy Howard and the side of the net. Gaudreau was in front to tap in the puck for his 22nd goal of the season.

SHARKS 5, AVALANCHE 4

DENVER (AP) — Joe Pavelski and Brent Burns each had a goal and three as-

sists, Martin Jones made 31 saves and San Jose held off Colorado.

Evander Kane, Joonas Donskoi and Lukas Radil also scored for the Sharks. They extended Colorado's recent slide after a 9-0-2 stretch lifted the Avalanche into first place in the Central Division in early December.

Tyson Jost scored twice, and Matt Calvert and Tyson Barrie also had goals for Colorado. The Avalanche have dropped six in a row, two in overtime, and are 3-8-3 since Dec. 4. □

Nets hold off Anthony Davis, Pelicans, 126-121

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — D'Angelo Russell had 22 points and 13 assists, and the Brooklyn Nets built up a big enough lead with a 73-point first half to withstand Anthony Davis' monstrous return to the lineup, beating the New Orleans Pelicans 126-121 on Wednesday night.

Davis finished with 34 points and a career-high 26 rebounds after a one-game absence, but there weren't enough rebounds to get in the first half, when the Nets opened a 24-point lead during their highest-scoring first half at home in 17 years. Joe Harris added 21 points for the Nets, who had 105 points through three quarters, then got consecutive baskets by Harris when New Orleans trimmed the down to seven with under 5 minutes remaining.

The Nets made nine of their first 15 3-point attempts during their highest-scoring first half at home since getting 75 against Golden State on Feb. 19, 2002. They finished with seven players in double figures, with DeMarre Carroll (19) and Spencer Dinwiddie (18) leading strong efforts off the bench.

Elfrid Payton scored 25 points for New Orleans in his second game back after missing more than a month with a broken finger. Julius Randle had 21, and Jrue Holiday 20.

THUNDER 107, LAKERS 100

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Paul George scored 37 points while getting booed whenever he touched the ball by Lakers fans still angry he didn't choose their team in free agency, leading Oklahoma City over Los Angeles.

Russell Westbrook had 14 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists despite 3-for-20 shooting, but his fellow Southern California native was the center of attention in the Thunder's only visit to the Lakers this season.

George scored nine points in the fourth quarter while the Thunder rallied from a five-point deficit and easily held on for their seventh win in 10 games.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 18 of his 25 points



New Orleans Pelicans' Anthony Davis (23) dunks the ball in front of Brooklyn Nets' Jared Dudley during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

in the first half for the Lakers, who dropped to 1-3 during LeBron James' absence with a groin injury. Los Angeles has lost six of nine overall after its offense managed just six field goals in the fourth quarter, along with the Lakers' usual awful free-throw shooting.

76ERS 132, SUNS 127

PHOENIX (AP) — Joel Embiid, playing despite a sore left knee, matched his season high with 42 points, 30 in the first half, and grabbed 18 rebounds and Philadelphia held off Phoenix.

Ben Simmons added 29 points and J.J. Redick 27 for the 76ers, who were without Jimmy Butler and Wilson Chandler, both due to an upper respiratory infection. Devin Booker scored 37 points for the Suns. DeAndre Ayton added 18 points and 11 boards and Josh Jackson scored 16 points.

Philadelphia led by 23 at halftime and as many as 30 in the third quarter. The Suns cut it to three points before

Redick finally sealed the victory with a pair of free throws with 4.3 seconds to play.

CELTICS 115, TIMBERWOLVES 102

BOSTON (AP) — Gordon Hayward came off the bench to score a season-high 35 points in Boston's victory over Minnesota.

Terry Rozier scored 11 of his 16 points in the first quarter while making his third start of the season because Kyrie Irving scratched both of his eyes in Monday's game against San Antonio. Hayward took over from there, with 13 in the second quarter and 15 in the third to finish with his highest-scoring

game with the Celtics.

Andrew Wiggins scored 31 points, and Karl-Anthony Towns had 20 of his 28 points — and grabbed five of his 12 rebounds — in the third quarter, when Minnesota trimmed a 22-point deficit to six points.

MAVERICKS 122, HORNETS 84

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Luka Doncic and Dennis Smith Jr. fueled an early long-range shooting spree and Dallas beat Charlotte to end a nine-game road skid.

Doncic and Smith each had 18 points, and Harrison Barnes added 17. The Mavericks hit 10 first-quarter 3-pointers — three from Doncic and two from Smith — and finished with 18 overall. Dallas won for the first time on the road since Nov. 28. It entered the game with a NBA-worst 2-16 road record, compared to 15-3 at home.

Dwight Powell scored 15 points, Wesley Matthews had 11, and DeAndre Jordan had eight points and 13 rebounds. Doncic added 10 rebounds and Smith seven assists.

Kemba Walker led Charlotte with 11 points.

HEAT 117, CAVALIERS 92

CLEVELAND (AP) — Josh Richardson scored 24 points and Miami — playing with Dwyane Wade sidelined by an illness — rolled past Cleveland.

Miami hit 16 of 31 3-pointers. Tyler Johnson added 16 points, and Derrick Jones Jr. had 13. The Heat have won seven of nine to reach the .500 mark at 18-18.

Cleveland dropped to 8-30 — the worst record in the NBA — with its seventh straight loss.

Tristan Thompson and Rodney Hood returned from injuries and started for the Cavaliers, but it mattered

little in their ninth loss in 10 games. Thompson had 14 points, and Hood added 13.

PISTONS 101, GRIZZLIES 94

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Blake Griffin had 26 points, eight rebounds and seven assists and Detroit beat Memphis to snap a three-game skid.

Griffin closed out a 13-0 Detroit run in the fourth quarter to put it out of reach, Reggie Jackson added 16 points, and Reggie Bullock and Luke Kennard had 13 each.

Jaren Jackson Jr. led Memphis with 26 points and 10 rebounds, and Kyle Anderson scored 15 points. Dillon Brooks finished with 14 points off the bench as the Grizzlies dropped their third straight.

WIZARDS 114, HAWKS 98

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bradley Beal had 24 points, Jeff Green added 22 and Thomas Bryant had 16 points and a career-high 15 rebounds in Washington's victory over Atlanta Hawks 114-98 on Wednesday night.

Tomas Satoransky had 14 points and a career-best 11 rebounds for the Wizards. Alex Len led Atlanta with a season-high 24 points and 11 rebounds. John Collins scored 21 points.

MAGIC 112, BULLS 84

CHICAGO (AP) — Nikola Vucevic had 22 points and 12 rebounds before sitting out the fourth quarter, Aaron Gordon added 18 points and a career-high nine assists, and Orlando routed Chicago.

Terrence Ross scored 15 off the bench and Evan Fournier had 13 points and seven assists for Orlando. The Magic shot 58 percent from the field.

Zach LaVine had 16 points, and Lauri Markkanen and Kris Dunn added 14 apiece for Chicago. □

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Gonzalez, Reed, Bailey 1st-time eligible finalists for hall

By BARRY WILNER
AP Pro Football Writer

First-time eligibles Tony Gonzalez, Ed Reed and Champ Bailey are among 15 modern-era finalists for the Pro Football Hall of Fame's class of 2019.

They will be joined in balloting on Feb. 2 by Steve Atwater, Tony Boselli, Isaac Bruce, Don Coryell, Alan Faneca, Tom Flores, Steve Hutchinson, Edgerin James, Ty Law, John Lynch, Kevin Mawae, and Richard Seymour. Although previously eligible, Flores — who coached two Raiders teams to Super Bowl titles — and long-time defensive lineman Seymour are finalists for the first time.

Also being considered for induction are senior committee nominee Johnny Robinson, a star safety for Dallas/Kansas City from 1960-71, and contributors finalists Gil Brandt, former personnel director for the Cowboys and now the NFL's top draft consultant, and Broncos owner Pat Bowlen.

A maximum of eight new members can be elected, five from the modern-era group. Inductions are Aug. 3 in Canton, Ohio.

Gonzalez played 17 seasons with the Chiefs and Falcons, but never made

a Super Bowl. No matter: he holds the career record for tight ends with 1,325, second only overall to Jerry Rice, and gained more than 15,127 yards while scoring 111 touchdowns. His string of 211 straight games with a catch lasted from 2000-13.

Reed spent 12 seasons with the Ravens, Texans and Jets, winning an NFL title in 2012. He's one of two players to lead the NFL in interceptions three times (2-4, 2008, 2010) and was the NFL Defensive Player of the Year in 2004. Bailey played 15 seasons with Washington and Denver and was a three-time All-Pro. Considered one of the game's best cover cornerbacks, he had a career-high 10 interceptions in 2006.

Lynch, a standout safety for Tampa Bay and Denver, becomes a finalist for the sixth straight year. Coryell, who coached the high-powered offenses of the Cardinals and Chargers in the 1970s and '80s, is a five-time finalist.

In all there, are three safeties, two cornerbacks, two offensive tackles, two coaches, one guard, one center, one tight end, one running back, one wide receiver and one defensive lineman as finalists. □



Denver Broncos head coach Vance Joseph, front left, greets Los Angeles Chargers head coach Anthony Lynn after an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 30, 2018, in Denver.

Associated Press

Chargers' James looking to make bigger impact vs. Ravens

By JOE REEDY
AP Sports Writer
COSTA MESA, Calif. (AP)

— Most rookies hit the figurative wall late in the season as the rigors of a full first year in the NFL catch up quickly. Derwin James, though, still feels like he did at midseason.

James will need to be at his best as the Los Angeles Chargers meet the Baltimore Ravens in an AFC wild-card playoff game. Sunday's matchup comes two weeks after the Ravens posted a 22-10 victory.

"I don't feel like it affects me because in high school and college I was active the whole year doing different sports, so I feel like my body is acclimated to it," James said. "There have been some games where I have felt sore, but off the field I got the right treatment."

James, who was the 17th overall pick in last April's NFL draft, has made an immediate impact across the league. He led the team in tackles (105), becoming the first rookie in franchise history to have 100 or more stops. He also joined the Rams' Corey Littleton as the only players in the league with 100-plus tackles, three or more sacks (3.5) and three or more interceptions.

According to Pro Football Focus, James graded out as the fifth-best safety during the regular season, including second in pass coverage. What James has done to date has even surprised defensive coordinator Gus Bradley, who had his share of talented young defensive backs when he was at Seattle.

"What he's brought to the table for us just as a skill-set and the flexibility it offers us, I mean, I can't say enough about it," Bradley said. "People talked about his energy, his fear and his love for the game, but I'd be lying if I said I thought it was to this level."

Bradley has deployed James in a variety of roles depending on the opponent. There have been some weeks where he has played mostly in the box to support the run defense and others where his coverage skills have been used to play the middle third of the field. One consistent thing week in and week out has been James being used as an extra pass rusher.

"I knew what type of player I was. I knew what I wanted to do when I came here," James said. "I feel like I've done those things here." James' run-stopping and pass-rushing skills will be

needed against the Ravens, who come into the game ranked second in the league in rushing. Since Lamar Jackson became the starting quarterback, Baltimore is averaging 229.6 yards on the ground over the final seven games. James is the 13th-best safety against the run, according to Pro Football Focus, and eighth in pass rushing. "When he blitzes, he gets to the quarterback," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. "He also can disrupt the run game. He's a dominant player." With both teams likely not changing their strategy from two weeks ago, James likes the fact the Ravens are focused on the run.

"That should put a chip on your shoulder there alone," he said. "They're going to run it right at us. We know that. We gotta stop 'em."

This will be the fourth time that James has faced Jackson. The first two times were in college when James was at Florida State and Jackson was at Louisville. James said the biggest difference now is the players around Jackson.

"I feel like he has better blockers around him, which allows him to be more patient in the pocket and find receivers. □

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Mariners unique approach lands LHP Yusei Kikuchi in Seattle

By **TIM BOOTH**

SEATTLE (AP) — Yusei Kikuchi smiled wide for the cameras, pointing to the back of his No. 18 jersey — a celebrated number for Japanese pitchers. In the city where one of his childhood idols, Ichiro Suzuki, became a major league star, Kikuchi is eager to prove he belongs in America, too. "Thank you for this new journey," Kikuchi said.

The prized Japanese left-hander was introduced as the newest member of the Seattle Mariners on Thursday, a day after signing a four-year deal with options that could make it a seven-year stay in the Pacific Northwest. The 27-year-old Kikuchi spent more than 40

minutes answering questions about why he wanted to come to the majors and why he chose Seattle. Kikuchi answered the vast majority of the questions from English-speaking reporters in English. His answers were brief, but it was a sign of how long he's wanted to play in the majors. The dream started when he was 15, and Kikuchi knew if he was going to realize it, English would be an asset.

A fastball ticking into the mid-90s helps, too. "I want to practice hard and adjust myself. I want to enjoy every single thing," Kikuchi said. Kikuchi also has an array of offspeed pitchers, part



Seattle Mariners pitcher Yusei Kikuchi smiles and shows off his new jersey following a news conference after his signing with the team, Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019, in Seattle.

Associated Press

of his resume as one of the top young pitchers in Japan. Kikuchi was posted by the Pacific League's Seibu Lions on Dec. 4. Under the rules in the November 2017 posting agreement, he had

until Wednesday afternoon Seattle time to sign with a major league team. Seattle is planning to limit Kikuchi's innings while keeping him on the regular rotation of starting every fifth

or sixth day. To make that happen, general manager Jerry Dipoto said there may be times Kikuchi goes through his normal routine but only throws one or two innings. □

Robertson, Phillies agree to \$23 million, 2-year contract



In this Saturday, Oct. 14, 2017 file photo, New York Yankees relief pitcher David Robertson throws during the seventh inning of Game 2 of baseball's American League Championship Series against the Houston Astros in Houston.

Associated Press

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — David Robertson got himself a new deal in a new pair of pinstripes.

The 33-year-old right-handed reliever and the Philadelphia Phillies agreed to a \$23 million, two-year contract on Thursday. Robertson gets \$10 million this year and \$11 million in 2020, and the Phillies have a \$12 million option for 2021 with a \$2 million buyout.

"The Phillies are a great or-

ganization, and they have that hunger to get back in the postseason and they're going in the right direction," Robertson said. "It's a place where I'll get a lot of opportunities to pitch in the back end of the bullpen and I don't see any reason why we can't get in the postseason."

Robertson went 8-3 with a 3.23 ERA and five saves in 69 games last season for the New York Yankees. He left the Yankees after the 2014 season to sign a \$46

million, four-year contract with the Chicago White Sox, who traded him to New York in July 2017.

An 11-year veteran and a 2011 All-Star, Robertson has appeared in at least 60 games in nine straight seasons. He could get opportunities to close in Philadelphia, which hasn't made the playoffs since 2011. Seranthony Dominguez led the Phillies with 16 saves last season, and manager Gabe Kapler likes versatility in his bullpen.

"He's going to pitch high-leverage innings for us," Phillies general manager Matt Klentak said of Robertson. "That's what he's done very effectively and consistently for a long time. The fact he has experience pitching the ninth inning is very appealing for us."

Hector Neris led the Phillies with 26 saves in 2017 and had 11 last year. He's also in the mix to pitch the ninth. It'll likely be determined by matchups.

Robertson has even better numbers against lefties than righties during his career. He has held lefties to a .188 batting average and

.268 on-base percentage vs. .222 and .302 for righties.

"I want to pitch whenever I can to help the team win games," Robertson said. "If I have to pitch in the sixth, seventh, eighth or even the ninth, it doesn't matter to me. I just want to be in the back end of the bullpen when the big outs need to get made."

Robertson represented himself in contract negotiations for the first time. Klentak said he was impressed and called it a "unique" experience talking money directly with the player. "He was very well prepared, he knew the market very well, he knew what was important to him and he was able to articulate it well and that helped us get to a deal," Klentak said.

Robertson spent parts of nine seasons in the majors with the Yankees, who selected him in the 17th round of the 2006 amateur draft. He made a pair of relief appearances against the Phillies in the 2009 World Series, allowing a two-run single to Raul Ibanez in the eighth inning of the opener and an RBI groundout to

Carlos Ruiz in the third inning of Game 5.

Robertson replaced Mariano Rivera after he retired following the 2013 season and had 39 saves in 2014.

He's 53-32 with a 2.88 ERA and 137 saves in 654 career appearances, all in relief.

"I had a great time playing in New York. They are an excellent organization," Robertson said, adding he spoke to Yankees general manager Brian Cashman about returning. "New York will always hold a special place in my heart. It was just time for me to go someplace else."

The Phillies have been active this offseason, acquiring shortstop Jean Segura and signing outfielder Andrew McCutchen. They finished 80-82 last year after leading the NL East in August.

Klentak said the team had a "productive" meeting with Manny Machado last month.

"I expect that the dialogue there will continue," Klentak said.

The team also is scheduled to meet with Bryce Harper. □

Expand playoff to get the guess work out of the game

By RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

The satisfying simplicity of sports is in the definitive result. A game is played. There is a winner and a loser and the winner gets a reward.

Often that reward is to just keep playing. Those are the rules from the schoolyard to stadiums. It is a model that generally works great, just not necessarily for major college football. With some legitimate reasons, the sport is resistant to the simplest premise: If you win something, you get something. Five years into the College Football Playoff there is a lot of chatter about expanding the four-team field. Down the road, probably when its 12-year contract with ESPN runs out, the playoff will expand. Because there is always money in playoff expansion.

Here's a plan: eight teams. The Power Five conference champions get in automatically. Three wild cards or at-large teams picked by the selection committee, with at least one of them the best champion from the Group of Five conferences. Yep, nothing in there



In this Jan. 1, 2018, file photo, Alabama head coach Nick Saban, left, and Clemson head coach Dabo Swinney talk before the Sugar Bowl semifinal playoff game for the NCAA college football national championship in New Orleans.

you probably haven't seen before. Simple, but certainly not universally accepted, even among those who want a bigger playoff. Automatic qualification is an uncomfortable concept for fans who fear a conference championship game upset could give a

precious playoff spot to a team that lost three or four regular-season games. Automatic qualification also makes college football's decision-makers squeamish because it was one of the downfalls of the Bowl Championship Series.

Back then, six conferences

had automatic entry for their champions, including the Big East. There was a cap on how many teams from one conference could be in the system. Tweaks were made to ensure teams ranked in certain positions were also guaranteed spots.

It was kind of a mess, but the problems were not necessarily applicable to a playoff where all games have championship ramifications.

The BCS increased college football's national following, encouraging fans to pay attention to teams and conferences beyond their regions. The College Football Playoff aims to continue that growth and a bigger playoff, with automatic bids for conference champions, accomplishes that. Why reward anything less than excellence?

Well, for one, Nick Saban is not going to be at Alabama forever. There will come a day when more than two or three teams in a given season could win a national title.

Also, right now the College Football Playoff selection committee is taking an educated guess when it comes to what is excellent. That's not criticism. The job of the committee is literally to guess the four best teams — a purposefully vague descriptor.

It was easy to see Alabama and Clemson were awesome this season. □

NFL parlays with Caesars as sponsor minus sports betting

By The Associated Press

The NFL entered a partnership with Caesars Entertainment on Thursday, the league's first official casino sponsor. The multi-year deal, however, does not include sports betting or fantasy football.

The arrangement begins with this weekend's playoffs and is worth \$30 million annually for three years, a person with knowledge of the agreement tells The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the league has not announced specific terms.

This latest development is part of a dizzying turn-about for the league. For years, the league insisted

gambling was one of the biggest threats to its existence.

Caesars will draw on its properties, celebrity chefs, music artists and other entertainment platforms to provide NFL fans with "unique experiences."

Caesars will have exclusive rights to NFL trademarks in the U.S. and United Kingdom, including the Super Bowl and draft. Caesars will host parts of the 2020 draft.

The Cowboys, Ravens, Saints, Falcons, Eagles, Bears, Raiders, Jets, Lions and Seahawks already have advertising agreements with casinos. Caesars Entertainment is heavily into sports books opera-

tions and has locations in New Jersey and Mississippi, along with Nevada. It has planned one in Pennsylvania. With the expansion of sports betting to other states made possible by last year's Supreme Court ruling, other gambling companies have reached partnerships with leagues. Last year, MGM Resorts became the official gambling partner of the NBA, the NHL and Major League Baseball.

Attempts by Las Vegas to advertise on the Super Bowl were rebuffed repeatedly in the past because the city has casino gambling and sports betting. Three years ago, the NFL canceled a fan-



In this April 27, 2018, file photo, people wait to get into the stadium for the second round of the NFL football draft in Arlington, Texas.

Associated Press

tasy sports convention that then-Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo was helping organize because it was going to be held in a convention area adjacent to a Las Vegas casino.

Things began changing in 2017 when the NHL put a team in Las Vegas, the first major sports franchise for the city. They changed

even more when the city lured the Raiders beginning in 2020 with a \$1.9 billion stadium built across the freeway from the Mandalay Bay hotel-casino. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell attended the groundbreaking for the new stadium and later awarded Las Vegas the 2020 NFL draft. □

With slump in iPhone sales, are we post Peak Smartphone?



The Apple logo is displayed at the Apple store in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Thursday, Jan. 3, 2019.

Associated Press

By MAE ANDERSON

NEW YORK (AP) — Behind Apple's disconcerting news of weak iPhone sales lies a more sobering truth: The tech industry has hit Peak Smartphone, a tipping point when everyone who can afford one already owns one and no breakthroughs are compelling them to upgrade as frequently as they once did. Some manufacturers have boosted prices to keep up profit. But Apple's shortfall highlights the limits of that strategy. The company said demand for iPhones is waning and revenue for the last quarter of 2018 will fall well below projections, a decrease traced mainly to China. Apple Inc.'s \$1,000 iPhone is a tough sell to Chinese consumers unnerved by an economic slump

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and the trade war with the U.S. They also have a slew of cheaper smartphones from homegrown competitors such as Huawei, Xiaomi and Oppo to choose from. Apple's shares dropped 9 percent Thursday on the sales slump forecast as the company lost about \$71 billion in market value. The news also reinforced investors' fears that the world's second-biggest economy is losing steam: The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down more than 550 points at midafternoon and the broader S&P 500 index was down 2 percent. The fact that even Apple's iPhone juggernaut is suffering cements a larger trend for all major smartphone makers. After a steady rise for a decade, worldwide smartphone shipments fell 3 percent to 1.42 billion in 2018, the first annual drop, according to International Data Corp., which tracks such movements. IDC estimates that shipments will rebound 3 percent in 2019 to 1.46 billion, but that still

falls short of 2017 levels. Apple's news is a "wake-up call for the industry," said analyst Dan Ives of research firm Wedbush Securities. And it's not just Apple. Demand has been lackluster across the board, Ives said. Samsung, long the leading seller of smartphones, has been hit even harder, as its phone shipments dropped 8 percent during the 12 months ending in September. "The smartphone industry is going through significant headwinds," Ives said. "Smartphone makers used to be like teenagers, and the industry was on fire. Now it feels like they're more like senior citizens in terms of maturity." Tech innovations in phones grew in leaps and bounds earlier in the 2010s, with dramatic improvements in screen size, screen resolution, battery life, cameras and processor speed every year. But the industry is a victim of its own success. Innovation began to slow down around 2014, once

Apple boosted the screen size with the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus models. While phones kept improving, new features tended to be incremental, such as a new flash technique to already excellent phone cameras. It's the stuff consumers won't typically notice — or want to shell out for. "Since the iPhone 6 you've seen it has been tough to innovate to continue to raise the bar," Ives said. Apple customers now upgrade every 33 months on average, longer than the 24 or 25 months three years ago, Ives said. It doesn't help that top phones come with four-digit price tags — such as \$1,100 for the iPhone XS Max and \$1,000 for Samsung's Galaxy Note 9. The top-end Max model sells for \$1,450 in the U.S. "They're getting more and more expensive while offering fewer and fewer new, innovative features that I'll actually use," said Zachary Pardes, a tech-savvy 31-year-old in Fairfield,

Connecticut. "I'll upgrade when the battery stops working. When I'm forced to buy a new phone, I'll buy a new phone."

Vivian Yang, a manager at a Beijing technology company, also balked at the price. "Nobody needs such a phone," she said.

IDC analyst Ramon Llamas said the cycle might bottom out and start growing again in 2021 or 2022, when people's current phones start reaching the end of their useful life. "People will still replace their phones. It's going to happen eventually," he said. But there's no "silver bullet" that will spur growth to levels seen in the past when the industry was less mature.

Foldable smartphones, with screens that unfold like a wallet to increase display size, are one thing that could spur excitement, but they're expensive and not due out until at least the end of the year.

Another thing that might spur growth: 5G, the next-generation that telecom companies are currently in the process of building, expected to be faster and more reliable than the current 4G network. The first 5G compatible phones are due out this year.

"There's more pressure on 5G as the next-wave smartphone," since sales are so lackluster, said Ives. "There will be a battle royale for 5G phones."

But 5G will take years for broad, nationwide deployment, so the new 5G smartphones coming out this year are not likely to make much of a splash immediately either.

Analysts say smartphone makers need to push into under-saturated areas like Africa and elsewhere, and also sell more services like cloud storage, streaming music and phone software. But the glory days of untrammelled growth appear to be over.

"It's going to be a slow slog," Llamas said. "By no means is this the end of the smartphone market. But this is an indication that the smartphone market can be a victim of its own success." □

No refuge for investors: Even "safe" funds fell in 2018

By STAN CHOE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The past year felt dismal for investors. Even worse, the gloom was all-encompassing.

Mutual funds of all types sank. Even those funds that are typically steadier during turbulent markets struggled through what became the worst year since the Great Recession for many investors.

Stock, bond and commodity markets all succumbed to worries about rising interest rates, a predicted slowdown in economic growth and the potentially painful effects of the global trade war. That meant losses not only for investors who went all-in on U.S. stock funds, which looked unstoppable after notching their best January in two decades, but also for those who hewed to the traditional advice and diversified their 401(k) accounts across many different markets.

The largest stock fund, Vanguard's Total Stock Market Index fund, lost 5.3 percent for the year, including dividends, its first loss since the financial crisis crushed the global economy in 2008. At the same time, the largest bond fund, Vanguard's Total Bond Market Index fund, lost 0.4 percent, and the price of gold fell 2 percent. It's the first year all three dropped at the same time since 1994.

By the last few months of 2018, the losses were also coming painfully fast, with indexes regularly swinging between big gains and big losses within the span of a couple hours.

"Fears are certainly growing that the good old days of the last several years are coming to an end," said Frances Donald, head of macroeconomic strategy at Manulife Asset Management. "This is a trader's market, where you want to pick your sectors very carefully," Unfortunately, that was difficult for many to do successfully in 2018. Only two of the 11 sectors that make up the S&P 500 index were able to rise: health care and utilities. And nearly two-thirds of the stocks that



In this Nov. 20, 2018, file photo stock screens are displayed at the New York Stock Exchange.

Associated Press

make up the index fell. Conditions seemed to favor managers of actively managed mutual funds, who say they can offer a steadier ride through such volatility by picking the best stocks and avoiding the worst. But they also had a rough 2018. Only 42 percent of active fund managers beat their index in 2018, according to Jefferies.

Here's a look at some of the trends that shaped the year for funds:

— U.S. stock funds got walloped, but foreign funds got hit harder.

S&P 500 index funds sank to their first down year in a decade after including dividends, losing 4.4 percent or more. But they were actually among the market's leaders.

Funds that focus on small U.S. stocks dropped even more on worries that higher interest rates will hurt their growth, among other challenges. The largest such fund, Vanguard's Small Cap Index fund, lost 9.3 percent and plunged more than 20 percent in the months following its late August peak.

Funds that specialize in stocks from other countries fared even worse, hurt by worries about slowing economic and profit growth due in part to rising trade

tensions with the United States.

Emerging-market stock funds lost an average of 16.1 percent in 2018, and Chinese stock funds were

down an average of 19.9 percent, according to Morningstar.

— Bond funds struggled.

Stock funds have a long history of sharp price swings,

so volatility shouldn't come as a big surprise. That's why many investors, even those with a long time horizon, keep some of their savings in bond funds. Bonds are supposed to offer a steadier ride with their regular payments and offer ballast to overall portfolios. But many bond funds also lost ground in 2018, the result of rising interest rates. The Federal Reserve raised short-term rates four times during the year. When rates are rising, the lower interest payments paid out by older bonds suddenly look less attractive, so their prices drop. Bond mutual funds have to account for those declines in their fund prices, and investors feel it.

The average intermediate-term bond fund, the most popular type of bond fund, lost 0.5 percent last year.

Funds that focus on corporate debt fared even worse as worries rose that a possible recession could lead to more defaults and downgrades. □

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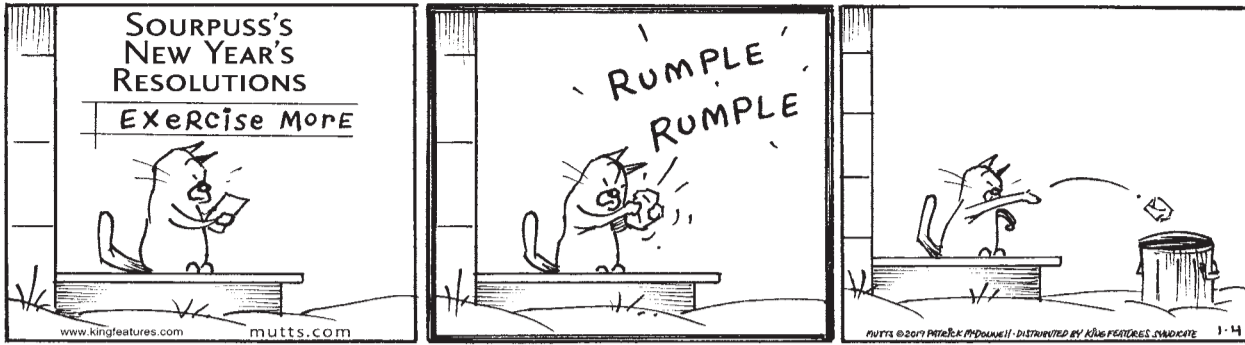
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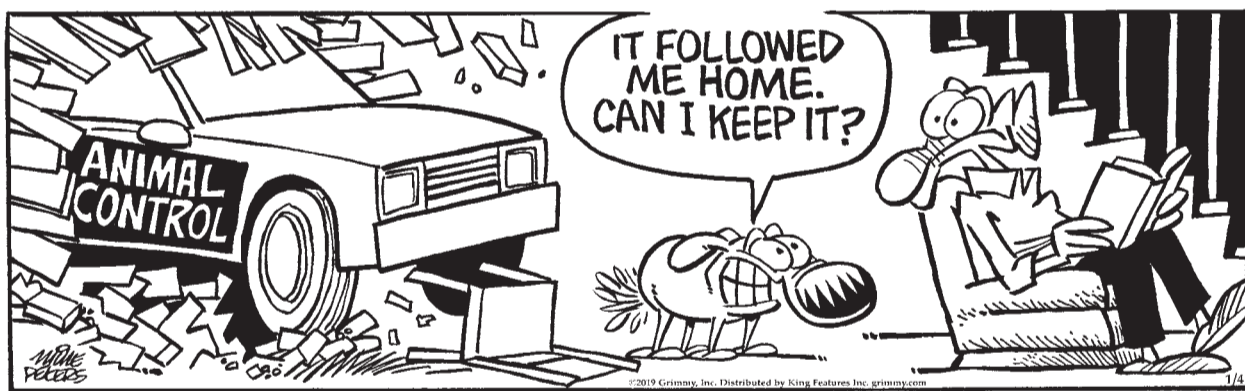
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Blondie



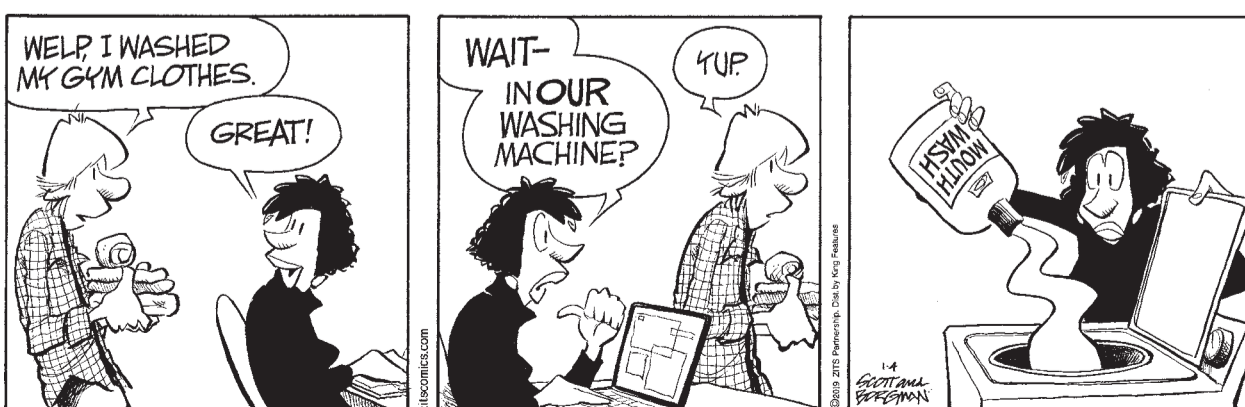
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	6			2				4
	8				4			7
						9		6
			7				9	
6			4		1			5
	7				3			
7	3							
1			9					5
5				8				7

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

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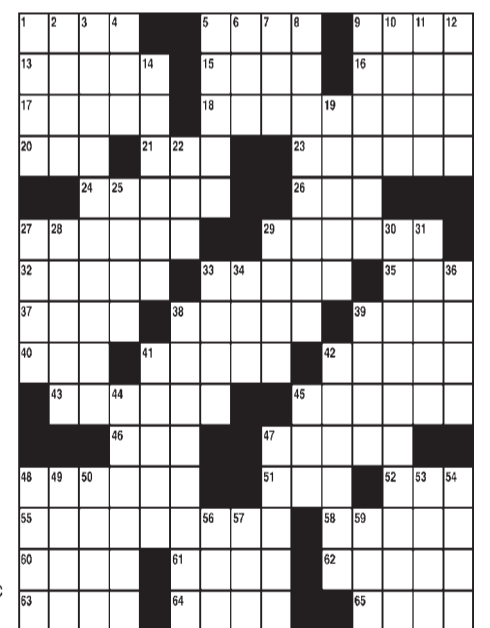
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

6	9	2	3	4	8	5	7	1
5	8	7	1	6	2	4	3	9
3	1	4	9	5	7	8	2	6
4	7	8	6	9	5	2	1	3
2	5	6	8	3	1	9	4	7
1	3	9	7	2	4	6	8	5
7	2	1	5	8	9	3	6	4
9	4	3	2	7	6	1	5	8
8	6	5	4	1	3	7	9	2

ACROSS

- 1 Lamb bearers
- 5 Lincoln & others
- 9 ___ in; wearing
- 13 Legitimate
- 15 Beard wearer
- 16 Tramp
- 17 Thrill
- 18 Mammal with a hard shell
- 20 Sesame and Easy; abbr.
- 21 "___ Doubtfire"
- 23 Vendor
- 24 Bangkok folks
- 26 Actor Holbrook
- 27 Buddy
- 29 Unwanted nasal growths
- 32 ___ the punch; added booze
- 33 Upper body garment
- 35 Lil Wayne's music
- 37 Gung ho
- 38 Pricy hotel booking
- 39 Alpha's follower
- 40 Hair covering
- 41 Foe
- 42 ___ pie; nut-topped dessert
- 43 Wild felines
- 45 Close relation
- 46 Mimic
- 47 WA's Puget ___
- 48 Astute
- 51 Apex
- 52 Flow back
- 55 Helper
- 58 Bert's pal
- 60 Cheese with a white coating
- 61 ___ polish; manicurist's bottle
- 62 Boulders
- 63 Collections
- 64 Monopoly or mah-jongg
- 65 Buzzers



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

S	N	I	P	S	C	R	A	P	G	R	A	B
L	O	N	E	P	H	A	S	E	R	O	L	E
O	N	C	E	L	I	G	H	T	O	U	S	E
B	O	O	A	I	L	S	A	C	T	O	R	
H	A	U	T	E	H	I	E					
S	P	E	C	K	S	H	O	R	R	I	D	
W	A	R	E	S	L	O	U	S	I	L	O	
A	G	E	S	J	A	N	E	T	B	L	U	
M	E	N	J	A	N	E	S	H	O	U	S	
S	T	R	U	C	K	R	O	A	M	E	D	
E	L	K	C	A	P	R	I					
G	A	F	F	E	R	A	C	E	N	B	A	
I	L	L	U	S	T	R	A	T	E	A	R	L
F	L	A	T	A	U	G	E	R	S	T	E	P
T	Y	K	E	P	E	E	R	S	S	E	W	S

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- 4 Command to Fido
 - 5 Pile up
 - 6 ___ none; without exception
 - 7 American ___; ND's state tree
 - 8 Coast
 - 9 Like sweater weather
 - 10 Lounge about
 - 11 Competent enough
 - 12 Entryway
 - 14 Insist on
 - 19 Passed out cards
 - 22 Get ___ of; shed
 - 25 Pay attention to
 - 27 Caramel-topped custard
 - 28 Come apart
 - 29 Compassion
 - 30 Took ___ over; outranked
 - 31 Hell's ruler
 - 33 Girls' nicknames
 - 34 That fellow
 - 36 Breathe heavily
- DOWN**
- 1 12/24 & 12/31
 - 2 Mr. Disney
 - 3 Stretchiness

- 38 ___ at; looking down on
- 39 Swiss capital
- 41 Force out
- 42 Poor person
- 44 Sea forces
- 45 Hawaiian food
- 47 In ___; fashionable
- 48 Hired vehicles
- 49 Attract; tempt
- 50 Way out
- 53 Two-wheeler
- 54 20th-century First Lady
- 56 Small battery
- 57 Curved edge
- 59 Steal from

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 24 weeks remain \$8500

Divi Links Golf
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 27 weeks remain \$8000
 1 BR WK # 1&2 Room #2252
 32 weeks remain \$ 10,000 Each

Divi Links Golf
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 35 weeks remain \$ 13,000 Each
 2 BR WK # 3 Room # 4215/4216
 28 weeks remain \$25,000

Tropicana Resorts
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 Ocean View \$ 60,000

Aruba Divi Phoenix
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 28 weeks remain \$ 35 ,000

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DIVI GOLF
Luxury Studio Unit 2314
 wk 50 12/14/19, 28 wks left
 \$3750 BO
 Divi Dutch Village wk 26 june
 29 3 Rm tower type building
 2 1/2 Baths Rm 94-96 \$5600BO
 rmwjm@aol.com
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 arubarenowner@gmail.com

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Low carb? Low fat? What the latest dieting studies tell us

By CANDICE CHOI

AP Food & Health Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bacon and black coffee for breakfast, or oatmeal and bananas?

If you're planning to try to lose weight in 2019, you're sure to find a fierce debate online and among friends and family about how best to do it. It seems like everyone has an opinion, and new fads emerge every year.

Two major studies last year provided more fuel for a particularly polarizing topic — the role carbs play in making us fat. The studies gave scientists some clues, but, like other nutrition studies, they can't say which diet — if any — is best for everyone.

That's not going to satisfy people who want black-and-white answers, but nutrition research is extremely difficult and even the most respected studies come with big caveats. People are so different that it's all but impossible to conduct studies that show what really works over long periods of time.

Before embarking on a weight loss plan for the new year, here's a look at some of what was learned last year.

FEWER CARBS, FEWER POUNDS?

It's no longer called the Atkins Diet, but the low-carb school of dieting has been enjoying a comeback. The idea is that the refined carbohydrates in foods like white bread are quickly converted into sugar in our bodies, leading to energy swings and hunger.

By cutting carbs, the claim is that weight loss will be easier because your body will instead burn fat for fuel while feeling less hungry. A recent study seems to offer



This June 9, 2014 file photo shows a dish of steak and cheese pasta in Concord, N.H.

Associated Press

more support for low-carb proponents. But, like many studies, it tried to understand just one sliver of how the body works.

The study, co-led by an author of books promoting low-carb diets, looked at whether varying carb levels might affect how the body uses energy. Among 164 participants, it found those on low-carb diets burned more total calories than those on high-carb diets.

The study did not say people lost more weight on a low-carb diet — and didn't try to measure that. Meals and snacks were tightly controlled and continually adjusted so everyone's weights stayed stable.

David Ludwig, a lead author of the paper and researcher at Boston Children's Hospital, said it suggests limiting carbs could make it easier for people to keep weight off once

they've lost it. He said the approach might work best for those with diabetes or pre-diabetes.

Ludwig noted the study wasn't intended to test long-term health effects or real-world scenarios where people make their own food. The findings also need to be replicated to be validated, he said.

Caroline Apovian of Boston University's School of Medicine said the findings are interesting fodder for the scientific community, but that they shouldn't be taken as advice for the average person looking to lose weight.

DO I AVOID FAT TO BE SKINNY?

For years people were advised to curb fats, which are found in foods including meat, nuts, eggs, butter and oil. Cutting fat was seen as a way to control weight, since a gram of fat

has twice as many calories than the same amount of carbs or protein.

Many say the advice had the opposite effect by inadvertently giving us license to gobble up fat-free cookies, cakes and other foods that were instead full of the refined carbs and sugars now blamed for our wider waistlines.

Nutrition experts gradually moved away from blanket recommendations to limit fats for weight loss. Fats are necessary for absorbing important nutrients and can help us feel full. That doesn't mean you have to subsist on steak drizzled in butter to be healthy.

Bruce Y. Lee, a professor of international health at Johns Hopkins, said the lessons learned from the anti-fat fad should be applied to the anti-carb fad: don't oversimplify advice.

"There's a constant look for an easy way out," Lee said.

SO WHICH IS BETTER?

Another big study this past year found low-carb diets and low-fat diets were about equally as effective for weight loss. Results varied by individual, but after a year, people in both groups shed an average of 12 to 13 pounds.

The author noted the find-

ings don't contradict Ludwig's low-carb study. Instead, they suggest there may be some flexibility in the ways we can lose weight. Participants in both groups were encouraged to focus on minimally processed foods like produce and meat prepared at home. Everyone was advised to limit added sugar and refined flour.

"If you got that foundation right, for many, that would be an enormous change," said Christopher Gardner of Stanford University and one of the study's authors.

Limiting processed foods could improve most diets by cutting down overall calories, while still leaving wiggle room for people's preferences. That's important, because for a diet to be effective, a person has to be able to stick to it. A breakfast of fruit and oatmeal may be filling for one person, but leave another hungry soon after.

Gardner notes the study had its limitations, too. Participants' diets weren't controlled. People were instead instructed on how to achieve eating a low-carb or low-fat in regular meetings with dietitians, which may have provided a support network most dieters don't have.

SO, WHAT WORKS?

In the short term you can probably lose weight by eating only raw foods, or going vegan, or cutting out gluten, or following another diet plan that catches your eye. But what will work for you over the long term is a different question.

Zhaoping Li, director of clinical nutrition division at the University of California, Los Angeles, says there is no single set of guidelines that help everyone lose weight and keep it off. It's why diets often fail — they don't factor into account the many factors that drive us to eat what we do.

To help people lose weight, Li examines her patients' eating and physical activity routines to identify improvements people will be able to live with.

"What sticks is what matters," Li said. □

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An awards show crossroads 1 year after the Time's Up Globes

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — To misquote "A Star Is Born," awards shows were far from shallow in 2018. Many confronted sexual misconduct in the entertainment industry head on, but as a new year kicks off with the Golden Globe Awards on Sunday one question lingers: Will it continue for another year?

For an event that's more known for its boozy moments than promoting social causes, the Golden Globe Awards went all in as the first major show of the #MeToo era last year. It embraced the newly formed Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, the red carpet was overtaken by a symbolic sea of black dresses, major stars walked proudly alongside activist leaders, Oprah Winfrey gave a barn-burner of a speech about empowerment and Natalie Portman even got in a jab about the all-male directing nominees while presenting the best director award.

Every televised and non-televised event to come had to take the stage in the shadow of the Globes, and all did so in their own way, sometimes with jokes and sometimes with statements: The Screen Actors Guild had all-female presenters, guests wore white roses at the Grammys and the Oscars gave a spotlight to Time's Up leaders and Harvey Weinstein accusers Ashley Judd, Salma Hayek, and Annabella Sciorra.

But this year will be differ-



In this Jun. 7, 2018 file photo, Oprah Winfrey poses in the press room with the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. Associated Press

ent. With just days to show time, there are no major statements or demonstrations planned for the Golden Globes show or the red carpet, and it could very well set the tone for what's to come with the other awards shows.

"This year, there's no sense of urgency the way there was last year," said Steve Pond, awards editor for The Wrap. "By the same token, there is a sense of 'we can't go back.'"

Subjects like equality and inclusiveness are now permanent fixtures of awards show discourse, Pond said, and their absence from topics discussed on stage would be "conspicuous."

"But the business of everybody wearing black, I think that was kind of a one-

time thing until something else that cataclysmic happens and needs to be addressed," Pond said.

Hosts Andy Samberg and Sandra Oh have said that they don't necessarily intend to get political on Sunday night, but will leave the door open for anyone who wants to use their platform to do so. In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, Samberg said he thinks "people could use a little smile."

"Not to ignore anything, but we spend so much time every day wallowing in a lot of things that are happening in our world that are really depressing, and with good reason — that stuff needs to be paid attention to — but there's also power to being positive and cele-

bratory in the tougher times as well," Samberg said.

Oh added: "I don't think it's shallow?to 1) have fun and 2) be honestly celebratory.... What I'm interested in is pointing to actual real change."

The "change" Oh referenced includes the cultural phenomena of films like "Black Panther," nominated for three awards (best drama, best original score and best original song) and "Crazy Rich Asians," nominated for best musical or comedy and best actress (Constance Wu).

In other words, this year it'll be up to the individual to make a statement. Wendy Shanker, an awards show writer who has also written speeches for individual Oscar winners, marveled at

the way the actresses in Time's Up took control of the "awards season narrative" at the Globes last year. "I don't know that they necessarily need to do the same thing this year. But I do believe that you will see many of the women and men on stage referencing #MeToo, referencing the shift in our culture," Shanker said.

That also goes for presenters and guests.

"I think they will book people who have strong vocal public personas," said Shanker. "Producers know that's what keeps a show interesting and I think audiences are engaged by the players of social media who have something to say beyond the performances."

Jessica Chastain is one of those who was just announced as a presenter for the show. The Oscar-nominated actress has established herself as a leading activist voice for equal pay and representation in Hollywood and has not been shy about making statements.

"I think people will still have a lot of fun people will be looking for fun and glamour," Shanker said. "(But) the Globes were always 'the party' and now this is 'the party with a message.' It's a protest party."

And Pond said it makes for a more interesting and powerful show.

"In a way the Globes are kind of uniquely suited to doing that because nobody really cares who wins," Pond said. □

Helped by Beyonce clip, Paris' Louvre breaks visitor record

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The Louvre in Paris, the world's most visited museum, received a record 10.2 million visitors in 2018, numbers boosted by a video clip shot by pop star Beyonce amid its paintings and sculptures.

The Louvre also mentioned in a statement Thursday the

success of its flagship exhibition on French master Delacroix as a reason for the record.

The video of Beyonce and her husband Jay Z, featuring the Mona Lisa and other world-famous artworks, has been viewed over 146 million times on YouTube.

The museum notes a sig-

nificant rise in the number of foreign visitors — almost three-quarters of total visitor numbers — mostly from the United States, China, other European countries and Brazil. Tourism in the French capital has rebounded since 2017 after a sharp fall following 2015 terror attacks. □



In this Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2015, Chris Baker and Jennifer Hinson from Nashville, Tennessee, use a selfie stick in front of the Louvre Pyramide in Paris.

Associated Press

Netflix's 'Bird Box' success gets Hollywood clucking

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Netflix said 45 million subscriber accounts worldwide watched the Sandra Bullock thriller "Bird Box" during its first seven days on the service, the biggest first-week success of any movie made for the company's nearly 12-year-old streaming service.

Netflix, which typically refuses to provide viewership numbers, made the rare disclosure in a recent tweet as movie producers, writers, actors and investors continue to size up a company that has already reshaped the way the world watches video.

The first-week audience means nearly one-third of Netflix's 137 million subscribers watched the movie



This file image released by Netflix shows Sandra Bullock in a scene from the film, "Bird Box." Associated Press

from Dec. 21 through Dec. 27 — a holiday-season stretch when many people aren't working and have more free time. Had 45 million people actually gone

to a theater in the U.S. to watch "Bird Box," it would have translated to about \$400 million in box-office revenue, based on average ticket prices.

But people were watching the movie on a service for which they already had paid and had the luxury of doing so without leaving their homes. That makes watching "Bird Box" more comparable to watching a television program, Wed-

bush Securities analyst Michael Pachter said. By that yardstick, the viewership for "Bird Box" is less impressive. For instance, the Super Bowl typically attracts 100 million to 110 million viewers in the U.S.

alone. The annual telecast of the Academy Awards has drawn a U.S. audience of 26 million to 40 million in recent years. And those totals are for a single day, not a week.

Television viewership and theatrical box-office numbers are typically calculated by third-party firms, unlike the "Bird Box" figure released by Netflix. The Los Gatos, California, company has steadfastly refused to divulge its viewership because it regards the data as a competitive advantage in deciding what programs will attract subscribers. All Netflix will say about its "Bird Box" number is that it counted only accounts that watched at least 70 percent of the movie. Multiple viewers sharing a single account are counted once.

Netflix so far has made its biggest splash with highly acclaimed TV series such as "House of Cards," "Stranger Things," and "The Crown." "Bird Box" is the latest example of the company's resolve to become a bigger player in movies, too. □

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<p style="font-size: x-small;">HAILEE STEINFELD DYLAN O'BRIEN</p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">BUMBLEBEE</h3> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES MON-SUN 3:00 5:25 MON-THU & SUN 1:00 4:00 6:00 9:00 FRI-SAT 1:50 4:50 6:50 9:50 11:50 PG-13</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">JAKE JOHNSON HAILEE STEINFELD</p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">SPIDER-MAN</h3> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH THE SPIDER-VERSE WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATION MON-SUN 2:15 PG</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">JASON MOMOA AMBER HEARD</p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">AQUAMAN</h3> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES MON-THU & SUN 7:50 FRI-SAT 7:50 10:45 PG-13</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">CXC MON-SUN 3:15 6:10 9:05 MON-THU & SUN 2:40 5:35 8:30 FRI-SAT 2:40 5:35 8:30 11:25 PG</p>	
<p style="font-size: x-small;">JENNIFER LOPEZ MILO VENTIMIGLIA</p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">SECOND ACT</h3> <p style="font-size: x-small;">MON-SUN 4:45 7:00 PG-13</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">JOHN C. REILLY SARAH SILVERMAN</p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Disney RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET</h3> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATION MON-SUN 1:45 PG</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small;">BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH CAMERON SEELY</p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">The GRINCH</h3> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES MON-SUN 1:00 PG</p>	

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Daryl Dragon, Captain of Captain & Tennille, dead at 76

By HILLEL ITALIE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Daryl Dragon, the cap-wearing "Captain" of Captain & Tennille who teamed with then-wife Toni Tennille on such easy listening hits as "Love Will Keep Us Together" and "Muskrat Love," died Wednesday. He was 76.

Dragon died of renal failure at a hospice in Prescott, Arizona, according to spokesman Harlan Boll. Tennille was by his side.

"He was a brilliant musician with many friends who loved him greatly. I was at my most creative in my life, when I was with him," Tennille said in a statement. Dragon and Tennille divorced in 2014 after nearly 40 years of marriage, but they remained close and Tennille had moved back to Arizona to help care for him.

Dragon and Tennille met in the early 1970s and soon began performing together, with the ever-smiling Tennille singing and the dourer Dragon on keyboards. He would later serve as Captain & Tennille's producer.



This Oct. 25, 1995 file photo shows Toni Tennille, left, and Daryl Dragon, the singing duo The Captain and Tennille, posing during an interview in at their home in Washoe Valley, south of Reno, Nev. Associated Press

Their breakthrough came in 1975 when they covered the bouncy Neil Sedaka-Howard Greenfield song "Love Will Keep Us Together."

Sedaka and Greenfield, a top hit-making team in the late 1950s and early 1960s, were nearing the end of their partnership and had written "Love Will Keep Us Together" as an ode to their longtime bond. Sedaka

himself recorded the song, released it as a single in France, and included it on his 1974 album "Sedaka's Back."

Captain & Tennille's version, slightly faster and funkier than the original, wasn't Dragon's first choice as a single. He had favored a cover of Beach Boy Bruce Johnston's "I Write the Songs," which in 1976 became a signature hit for

Barry Manilow.

But "Love Will Keep Us Together" topped the charts in the summer of 1975. It won a Grammy for record of the year and not only made Captain & Tennille stars, but helped further revive Sedaka's career. In October 1975, his single "Bad Blood" hit No. 1. Sedaka tweeted Wednesday that Dragon was "a great musician, keyboard

player and friend for over 40 years. He took 'Love Will Keep Us Together,' made it his own with the magic of his playing and her incredible voice."

Meanwhile, Captain & Tennille — known early on as The Captain & Tennille — followed with a mix of covers such as "Muskrat Love" and "Shop Around" and original songs, including Tennille's ballad "Do That to Me One More Time," which hit No. 1 in 1980. They also briefly starred in their own television variety show before their careers faded in the 1980s. Over the past 30 years, they continued to perform and work together on occasion, with more recent albums including "The Secret of Christmas."

A Los Angeles native, Dragon was the son of Oscar-winning composer Carmen Dragon and singer Eloise Dragon and was himself a classically trained musician. Before he was with Tennille, he played keyboards for the Beach Boys and was dubbed "The Captain" by singer Mike Love, who noted Dragon's fondness for sea captain's caps. □

Pro wrestling interviewer 'Mean Gene' Okerlund dies

By JEFF BAENEN

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Eugene "Mean Gene" Okerlund, whose deadpan interviews of pro wrestling superstars like "Macho Man" Randy Savage, The Ultimate Warrior and Hulk Hogan made him a ringside fixture in his own right, has died. He was 76.

World Wrestling Entertainment announced Okerlund's death on its website Wednesday. Okerlund's son, Tor Okerlund, told The Associated Press that his father died early Wednesday at a hospital in Sarasota, Florida, near his home in Osprey, Florida, with his wife, Jeanne, by his side.

Tor Okerlund said his father, who had undergone three kidney transplants, fell a few weeks ago "and it just kind of went from bad to worse."

Okerlund started as an interviewer in the Minneapolis-based American Wrestling Association. He moved to WWE — then the World Wrestling Federation — in 1984 and hosted several shows, including "All-American Wrestling," "Tuesday Night Titans" and "Prime Time Wrestling." Besides being the company's lead locker room interviewer, he also provided ringside commentary.

Former wrestler and ex-Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, who wrestled as "The Body," dubbed Okerlund "Mean Gene."

Ventura told the Minneapolis Star Tribune on Wednesday that in an interview he "laughingly called him 'the Mean Gene Hot Air Machine,' and the 'Mean Gene' stuck."

Ventura called Okerlund "the best at what he did,



In this July 31, 1988 photo provided by the WWE, "Mean" Gene Okerlund addresses the crowd before a pro wrestling event in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

the best straight man interviewer in wrestling history." "You only had to tell him once" how to pitch and sell a wrestling story, Ventura told the AP about Okerlund's knack for salesmanship. "He's like a carnival barker. ... He was the best

salesman. And he never did retakes. ... Ninety percent of the time if there was a screw-up on an interview, it was not because of Gene. That's how good he was."

A native of Sisseton, South Dakota, Okerlund was

known for his natty attire and mustache. He was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2006.

Okerlund also could sing and performed the national anthem at the first WrestleMania in 1985. He sang "Tutti Frutti" later that year on the WWF's "The Wrestling Album."

"He really was the ultimate, the consummate entertainer," his son said.

In a 2015 interview with the Star Tribune, Okerlund credited the late pro wrestling pioneer Verne Gagne for his start.

Okerlund worked in sales at the television station where Gagne's AWA was based and had experience in radio. Gagne approached Okerlund in the hallway when the regular interviewer could not make a taping in the early 1970s, Okerlund recalled. □

Toot! Toot! New riverboat to ride Mississippi in New Orleans

By STACEY PLAISANCE
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Few experiences capture old New Orleans and the Mississippi River quite like a paddlewheel riverboat coming round the muddy bend with its tooting whistle horn, towering smoke stacks and water-churning propeller. This month the first new riverboat in more than a decade is set to launch in this Louisiana port city. A plunge in tourism after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 forced the New Orleans Steamboat Company to sell off one of its two boats, but the arrival of the City of New Orleans is a sign of the steadily rising tide of tourists each year to this Southern city of Mardi Gras fame.

"People come from all over the world. It is astonishing. They really want to see the river," said Adrienne Thomas, marketing director for the company, which also owns another riverboat, the Natchez.

A century ago, countless paddlewheel riverboats plied the Mississippi and its tributaries. Today, New Orleans has two: the Natchez and the Creole Queen, which is operated by New Orleans Paddlewheels.

Now the City of New Orleans is coming full circle, back to the state where it was built in 1991. For years it operated as a casino boat in Rock Island, Illinois, until the mid-1990s. But after that state legalized onshore casinos, the boat became obsolete, said Matthew Dow, project manager heading



This Nov. 29, 2018, photo shows a chandelier inside the "City of New Orleans" riverboat, as it is being restored in New Orleans.

Associated Press

the vessel's renovation. The then-named "Casino Rock Island" sat unused for years until it was purchased by the New Orleans Steamboat Company in 2016.

"We instantly fell in love with the boat," Dow said. "We saw the potential in her and knew that we could do her justice and bring her back not only to her former glory but well beyond that." Dow said the vessel already looked the part of a New Orleans riverboat, with its curved decks, plentiful windows, decorative fleurs de lis and giant paddlewheel. Initially it was brought to a dry dock for hull repairs, then towed to New Orleans for a makeover.

"We had to rip all of the walls out, all the ceilings, a lot of the insulation," Dow

said. "Basically, we had to strip this boat down to the superstructure, to bare bones, and everything had to go back new."

There were additions, too. A dumb waiter was added to connect the galley to all three decks for food transport, along with passenger elevators and handicapped-accessible restrooms. The Associated Press was given the first look at the new riverboat recently.

Dow says the company is aiming to have the boat ready for tours by Jan. 21, when the Natchez goes into its annual service and maintenance layup. After that, both boats will operate simultaneously.

The two riverboats look similar, both painted red and white with giant red paddlewheels and exterior deck space for close-up views by passengers of the giant propeller. But the new boat has more indoor space.

The Natchez was built in the 1970s for sightseeing with a lot of open deck space, and its main deck is occupied mostly by the boat's vintage 1925 steam engines, an attraction for passengers. The Natchez is one of only six commercially-operated steamboats left in the U.S.

The new boat is run with a modern diesel-electric sys-

tem. It takes up less room, allowing for more indoor space for dinner seating, jazz brunches and special events.

"Even though we don't have the steam engines, we do have the working paddlewheel, and we want to show that off," Dow said.

As with the Natchez, cruises on the City of New Orleans will include narration about the city and shoreline sights such as the port, historic Jackson Square, the Chalmette Battlefield, which

marks the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812, and the Chalmette National Cemetery.

And there will be plenty of live band music as the boat plies the Mississippi.

Cyndi Gruenberg of Houston, Texas, rode the Natchez with her husband and two daughters recently and said they learned much about the city.

"It was a great trip, a little bit of history along the river and just a fun ride," said Gruenberg. "It's pretty cool. It brings nostalgia back."

Tourism officials say they don't expect a shortage of passengers, as the number of visitors to New Orleans has surpassed pre-Katrina levels in recent years.

Stephen Perry, head of New Orleans & Co., which promotes tourism, says the city is "back in every way" with increased hotel and restaurant bookings. Riding a paddlewheel is part of the New Orleans experience, he noted.

"This is one of the most eclectic, authentic places left in America," Perry said. "People don't come here only for food and music. What they like is other experiences."

"A paddlewheeler is just one of the great added attractions of imagining yourself in a time gone by." □



In this Nov. 29, 2018, photo, Matt Dow, project manager for the restoration of the "City of New Orleans" riverboat, plays the callopie on the vessel in New Orleans.

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This Nov. 29, 2018, photo shows stairs that lead to the second deck on the "City of New Orleans" riverboat, as it is being restored, in New Orleans.

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